

The Eye of the Scorpion, by Iain McLaughlin

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[Part One]

(A sandstorm is blowing.)

YANIS: Damn this. Where is he?

HOREMSHEP: Yanis.

YANIS: Finally. I thought you got lost in the sandstorm.

HOREMSHEP: Not this close to Thebes.

YANIS: A temple rat like you could get lost in his own tunic. If I didn't need you, I'd tear your head from your scrawny shoulders.

HOREMSHEP: Are your troops in place?

YANIS: They fear me too much to be anything else.

HOREMSHEP: Good. Come with me. I found something on the way here. Something important.

YANIS: What is it?

HOREMSHEP: You'll see.

YANIS: Hurry, then. Our plans will be ruined if you're missed in the city.

HOREMSHEP: Here, by my chariot. Take a closer look. Open it.

YANIS: That? That's worth risking everything for? I swear, if this is a trick, I

(Creak of wood, sound of lots of little things squeaking. Yanis screams. Horemshep laughs.)

FAYUM: No, no, this is not good. This is not good at all.

ANTRANAK: Still muttering and watching the night skies, Fayum? How are the omens, hmm? No, don't tell me. They're bad.

FAYUM: The god sends signs in the sky that speak only of terrible things to come, Antranak.

ANTRANAK: Nonsense. We are safe inside Pharaoh's own palace with my troops on constant guard. Nothing can harm us here.

FAYUM: We shall see.

ANTRANAK: Sometimes I wonder what you priests are taught. Still, the god's ways are not mine to question. I'm only a soldier. Goodnight, Fayum.

(Footsteps recede.)

FAYUM: Hmm. I fear we have very few good nights ahead of us.

(Tardis internal door opens.)

PERI: And that's the *small* library?

DOCTOR: The big one's up ahead.

PERI: I can't believe there's more. We've been wandering these corridors for hours.

DOCTOR: I thought you wanted to know your way around.

PERI: I do, believe me, but I lost my bearings six corridors, three floors and two hours ago.

DOCTOR: It just takes a little getting used to, that's all. You'll know your way about in no time.

PERI: So you really know what all these doors are?

DOCTOR: Naturally. For instance, this is the main library.

(Door opens, sound of running water.)

PERI: (chuckles) All the books are going to get wet.

DOCTOR: Of course, sometimes the Tardis moves things about. Still, not to worry. A little redecorating never hurt anybody.

PERI: A little redecorating? You've got a lake in there!

DOCTOR: Yes, I know. I much preferred it where it was. Where to next?

PERI: Don't suppose you've got a restaurant stashed away here? My stomach thinks my throat's been cut.

DOCTOR: There should be a food machine around here somewhere. I haven't used it recently.

(Strange noise, they cry out.)

PERI: Doctor!

DOCTOR: Hold on to something!

(The noise goes.)

DOCTOR: I think it's passed.

PERI: Oh, it feels so hot, suddenly.

DOCTOR: Yes, that's a bit worrying. Come on, this way.

(Runs.)

PERI: Oh, I'm fine, thanks. How are you?

DOCTOR: (distant) Peri!

PERI: Slow down. I don't want to get lost in this.

(Running feet. Console being operated.)

PERI: How can the console room be in here? We've gone down three flights of stairs and

DOCTOR: Shh.

PERI: Do you have

DOCTOR: Shh. Ah,

PERI: From that ah I take it I don't have to ask if you know what happened.

DOCTOR: We've materialised. The Tardis has been reprogrammed.

PERI: By who? Is there somebody else on board?

DOCTOR: I'm just checking. No, that can't be right. According to the Tardis, she was reprogrammed by me.

PERI: That's impossible. We were stuck in the middle of this flying rabbit warren.

DOCTOR: Yes, it does seem more than a little odd.

PERI: Where are we going now?

DOCTOR: Just a short hop, it seems. A few million miles to the side and a couple of days back. Ah, we're almost there.

PERI: One day soon you're going to have to teach me how these controls work.

DOCTOR: Perhaps. Let's see where we are first.

(The Tardis materialises. Tardis door opens.)

PERI: So, where are we?

DOCTOR: From the gravity and atmosphere, I'd say Earth. (deep breath) No industrial by-products in the air. Definitely Earth. Egypt, roughly 1400 BC.

PERI: Oh, come on. Even you can't tell all that from the air.

DOCTOR: True. But the hieroglyphics on the wall of the house behind the Tardis are a bit of a give-away.

PERI: Smart guy. What do they say, anyway?

DOCTOR: They're prayers to ward off evil and protect the house.

(Creaking.)

PERI: Hmm. Whoever lived here didn't have much faith in their prayers. The place is abandoned. A few jars, some rope, bits of pottery, some clothes and old wheel.

DOCTOR: Hmm. Very interesting. Can you hear something?

(A woman's voice nearby.)

PERI: Hmm? Like what?

ERIMEM [OC]: Help me!

DOCTOR: Like that.

PERI: Her chariot's out of control.

DOCTOR: There's another chariot. She's being chased.

PERI: He's more than chasing her.

DOCTOR: Behind the Tardis, quickly.

ERIMEM: Someone, help! Stop!

PERI: We have to do something.

DOCTOR: Like what?

PERI: Think faster, they're almost on top of us.

DOCTOR: He can't drive and use his bow accurately at the same time. Grab that rope over there. Tie one end around the Tardis.

PERI: What are you going to do?

DOCTOR: Take the other end to the far side of the breach in the wall and yank it tight after the first chariot is through.

PERI: This rope is slippery. It's covered with some kind of oil.

ERIMEM: Steady! Steady!

DOCTOR: Over here! This way! Peri, are you ready?

PERI: Nearly.
DOCTOR: Hurry, she's almost through. Quickly!
PERI: There, done. She's through. Pull it tight! We've got him!
ERIMEM: (distant) Stop! Slow down!
DOCTOR: Her horses must have been scared out of their wits. She can't control them. Keep an eye on our friend there.
PERI: What?
DOCTOR: I don't have time to argue. Someone has to stop those horses. Tell your friend I've borrowed his chariot for a few minutes. Hiyah!
(Horses neigh and the chariot rattles off. The driver groans.)
PERI: I hope this isn't an antique.
(Breaking pottery.)
PERI: Sorry.

(Thunder of horses hooves.)
DOCTOR: Hiyah! Hiyah!
ERIMEM: Whoa! Slow down! Stop!
DOCTOR: I'm almost there!
ERIMEM: Help me!
DOCTOR: Hang on!
ERIMEM: Hurry!
DOCTOR: You'll have to step across.
ERIMEM: I can't.
DOCTOR: The horses are too frightened to stop. There's no alternative. I'm almost there. Just a little closer.
(Scrapes.)
DOCTOR: Oops, a little too close. Gently. Gently now. Now step across.
ERIMEM: I can't! (Ohs! carry on below the Doctor's speech.)
DOCTOR: You have to. Hurry. I can't hold the chariots this close for long. Take my hand. Take it! Now, jump. It's just one step. Step now! I've got you. It's all right. I've got you. Whoa. Whoa, now.
(The chariot stops.)
DOCTOR: Are you hurt?
ERIMEM: Stay away from me.
DOCTOR: It's all right, I'm not going to hurt you. Though I can't say the same for that chap I borrowed this chariot from.
ERIMEM: Where is he?
DOCTOR: Back there, with a friend of mine, unconscious.
ERIMEM: Good! Get me away from here.
(Horses trotting.)
DOCTOR: I don't suppose you'd care to tell me why he was trying to kill you?
ERIMEM: You don't know?
DOCTOR: If I knew, I wouldn't ask, would I?
ERIMEM: You're a stranger here.
DOCTOR: Well, I've been to Egypt before, but I don't think I've been recently.
ERIMEM: Take me to Thebes.
DOCTOR: You haven't answered my question.
ERIMEM: When we are safe in Thebes, I will answer all your questions. Just get me there.
DOCTOR: All right. Hold on. Hup! Get up!
(Horses canter.)

DOCTOR: Whoa.
PERI: Ah, Doctor. I'm glad you're back.
(Pottery breaks, man groans.)
PERI: That's my last pot.
DOCTOR: You enjoyed that too much, young lady.
ERIMEM: I hoped he would be dead.
DOCTOR: I think that's rather harsh, don't you?
ERIMEM: I owe him and his kind a hundred times worse.
PERI: You got her then?

DOCTOR: So it would seem.

PERI: Now, who is she, and why was this guy trying to kill her? I thought he might have been a bandit, but that's battle armour he's wearing.

DOCTOR: Yes, I spotted that as well. And whoever this is, she's too afraid to talk here. She's almost in shock. We'll take her to Thebes. She thinks she'll be safe there, and we might get some answers.

PERI: What about him? Four of us on that chariot's going to be cramped.

DOCTOR: These war chariots were built for two passengers and a driver. Leave your sleeping friend there. He'll be all right in a minute or two, apart from a terrible headache.

ERIMEM: Others of his kind are bound to be close by now. We must leave at once.

DOCTOR: That might be a good idea. I've had more than enough excitement for one day.

PERI: And we still don't know what brought us here.

DOCTOR: One crisis at a time, Peri. One crisis at a time.

(Horses galloping.)

YANIS: Stop! Stop! We'll never catch them before they reach Thebes. Their archers'd slaughter us as we approached. Damn you, stranger. Where did you come from?

(Hubbub of voices.)

DOCTOR: Here we are, Peri. Thebes.

PERI: I didn't expect it to be so huge.

DOCTOR: Yes, impressive, isn't it?

PERI: If Howard could see me now. He always complained I didn't share his interest in history.

DOCTOR: Where to?

ERIMEM: The palace.

DOCTOR: Are you sure? This is an enemy chariot. I don't think they'll exactly welcome us with open arms.

ERIMEM: That will not be a problem, Doctor.

PERI: Doctor, have you noticed the people?

DOCTOR: They're all kneeling.

PERI: Bowing, and generally grovelling.

DOCTOR: Excuse me, I don't think you've told us exactly who you are.

ERIMEM: No, I did not. Stand proud and firm. Show that nothing has happened to harm us.

PERI: We've got company.

DOCTOR: So I see. Whoa, there. Whoa.

PERI: I don't like the look of those swords, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I don't like the look of the spears, either. Best behaviour, Peri.

ANTRANAK: Mighty one, we sing praises to the gods for your safe return.

PERI: Mighty one?

ERIMEM: Escort us to the palace, Antranak. We have a great deal to do, but this is not the place to do it.

ANTRANAK: As you command, mighty Pharaoh.

PERI: Pharaoh?

DOCTOR: I must be getting old. I thought I knew the names of all Egypt's Pharaohs.

PERI: Should I be bowing or curtsying or something?

ERIMEM: Yes, but please refrain from doing so. The chariot is quite small, and it would be very unseemly for a friend of Pharaoh to fall off in public.

PERI: Whatever you say.

ERIMEM: I would wager, Doctor, that you did not expect anything like this when you first saw my chariot being chased.

DOCTOR: Ah, not really, no.

ERIMEM: But I think the unexpected is something you are familiar with. Am I right?

DOCTOR: I was under the impression the divine Pharaoh is always right.

ERIMEM: (laughs) I'm yet to actually be crowned, Doctor, but when I have been I think I would do well to avoid sparring in word games with *you*. Now smile and wave to the people. We have been victorious.

(The crowd cheers.)

YANIS: So, you are the spineless pig who let that whelp of a girl escape. Do you have an explanation as to how the Egyptian pup escaped from a squadron of over dozen chariots? Make your answer good, Kishik, or I will stake you in the sand and watch the buzzards feast on your eyes and innards.

KISHIK: It wasn't my fault, sire. I plead for mercy.

YANIS: Save your pleading, dung beetle. I want answers. How did she escape?

KISHIK: She had a large escort. Six, no, ten chariots. We killed all the rest. We even got her driver.

YANIS: And still she escaped. Imbecile! Worse, coward!

KISHIK: No, Lord Yanis. She had help.

YANIS: What help?

KISHIK: A man with fair hair and strange clothing, and a violent girl who repeatedly struck me even when I was unable to defend myself.

YANIS: I know! I saw her! I saw it all! A girl should be no match for a man, or even you. Tell me about that man.

KISHIK: I barely saw him, sire. I only know that he knocked me from my chariot as if by magic.

YANIS: Not magic, idiot. Rope! But he handled the chariot like a true warrior. The brat's horses were running as if they had demons at their tails, but he took our chariot and caught them easily. I've never seen better.

KISHIK: Except for you, of course, mighty Yanis.

YANIS: Of course. Even at speed, he pulled that girl onto his chariot with one hand. My gut tells me he's a dangerous enemy.

KISHIK: Let me take a party into Thebes to kill him.

YANIS: If I sent anyone to do that, it would be someone I could trust to follow orders. And you were ordered not to attack the Egyptian chariots until I arrived.

KISHIK: But they would have escaped if I had waited any longer.

YANIS: What has happened now is that that unbedded whelp who calls herself Pharaoh knows that we are here, and she knows that we will attack sooner rather than later. I think I should have slit you open and let the dogs feed. You're worse than useless.

KISHIK: No, great Yanis. Mercy, please. I have a wife and four children at home. Let me live. I will not fail you again. I am loyal. I have always been loyal to you.

YANIS: And to my predecessor. As I remember, you helped me murder him. I will let you live, Kishik, but at a price.

KISHIK: Anything. I'll do anything.

YANIS: I know you will. Come through here. My private shrine is in the back of this tent.

KISHIK: I am unworthy, lord.

KISHIK: It is dark. I can't see.

YANIS: Here, I'll bring a light.

(Sound of lots of tiny insect legs skittering.)

KISHIK: What? No! No! Save me! Argh!

YANIS: At least now you may be useful.

(Knock on door.)

ERIMEM: Come.

(Door opened.)

ANTRANAK: Pharaoh.

ERIMEM: You have news, Antranak?

ANTRANAK: Yes, highness. I sent a chariot squadron to the area of the desert where you were attacked. The bodies of our men were recovered.. They will be buried with honour and their souls will find rest.

ERIMEM: Good. Meanwhile, I have ordered a banquet to thank the strangers who saved me today. I will need my friend there.

ANTRANAK: As you command, majesty. You do these strangers a great honour with this banquet.

ERIMEM: No more than they have earned.

ANTRANAK: True, but what do we know of them?

ERIMEM: Only that they risked their lives to save mine, without knowing who or what I was. You don't trust them.

ANTRANAK: I don't *know* them, majesty. But they arrived at a fortunate time for you.

ERIMEM: For which I am grateful.

ANTRANAK: As am I. (sighs) Perhaps I've been a soldier for too long, but good luck like this makes me suspicious, especially when my Pharaoh's safety is in question.

ERIMEM: We have all had enough bad fortune this year, Antronak. Let us celebrate what good luck we can.

ANTRANAK: I will be at the banquet as you wish. With your permission, I will go and prepare myself.

ERIMEM: Of course.

(Footsteps, door closed.)

ANTRANAK: Soldier, double the guard on great Pharaoh's chambers immediately.

SOLDIER: Sir.

ANTRANAK: And set others near the quarters of the pair who came into the city with Pharaoh. but don't make it obvious. There's no need for them to know we're watching them.

(Knocking on door.)

DOCTOR: Peri, are you ready yet?

PERI [OC]: I'll be out in a minute.

DOCTOR: Do try to hurry. It's considered bad form to keep the ruler of the known world waiting in her own palace.

PERI [OC]: Okay, okay. Here I come, ready or not.

(Door opens.)

PERI: Well? What do you think?

DOCTOR: Er. Ahem. You've been busy.

PERI: Not me. I've had half a dozen servants helping me bathe, get this dress on, put this stuff on my eyes.

DOCTOR: Kohl. It's used to make the sloe eyed shape.

PERI: At least you didn't have servants trying to shave your head.

DOCTOR: Well, it is their custom for people to have bald heads and wear wigs. Much cooler in the heat, apparently.

PERI: Can we see the pyramids from here? I've always wanted to see them. And the Sphinx.

DOCTOR: I'm afraid not. Thebes is quite a way from Giza. If we were in the royal palace at Memphis it would be a different story. Shall we?

PERI: Is something wrong? You look a bit, I don't know, edgy.

DOCTOR: Just hoping my memory's playing up, that's all. I can name every Pharaoh Egypt ever had, and I'm certain there was never a Pharaoh Erimem.

PERI: She's due to be crowned in a few weeks. You must be wrong. Maybe you just forgot her.

DOCTOR: Female Pharaohs were a rarity, Peri. I'm not likely to forget one. Hatshepsut, Smenkhare. Something must happen to stop Erimem being crowned.

PERI: Oh, and now we have to go and have a banquet with her, knowing that she never gets to be Pharaoh. You really know how to kill an evening, Doctor.

FAYUM: You look worried, Antranak. But of course, you always look worried.

ANTRANAK: I'm in no mood for your humour today, Fayum.

FAYUM: I fear your mood is about to get worse.

HOREMSHEP: Greetings to you both.

ANTRANAK: What do you want, Horemshep?

HOREMSHEP: Does the priest of Horus need a reason for speaking to the head of the palace guard?

ANTRANAK: You never do anything without a reason. What is it this time?

HOREMSHEP: Nothing. What do you know of the strangers Pharaoh honours with this banquet?

ANTRANAK: Only what my Pharaoh tells me. That is enough. For anyone. Even the chief of priests.

HOREMSHEP: Of course. But still, I am curious.

ANTRANAK: Then question Pharaoh and leave me be.

HOREMSHEP: Surely you're not jealous of Pharaoh's new friends, Antranak? She's never honoured you with a banquet, but then, you haven't saved her life either.

ANTRANAK: I warn you, priest.

FAYUM: If you're so interested in Pharaoh's guests, Horemshep, why not ask them? They've just arrived.

(Fanfare.)

HOREMSHEP: Perhaps later. Gentlemen.

(Footsteps recede.)

FAYUM: Why does he constantly bait, you, Antranak?

ANTRANAK: Because I have almost as much influence in the palace as he does, and that eats away at him. (sighs) But I should know better than to rise to his bait. And now I have duties to perform.

FAYUM: Of course.

PERI: Is this party all for us, Doctor?

(Fanfare.)

DOCTOR: I think we're on.

ANTRANAK: The great and mighty Queen, daughter of the stars, Pharaoh in the eyes of the gods and soon to be crowned. All bow to Erimemushinteperem, divine and eternal, the living god.

DOCTOR: (sotto) Peri, kneel.

PERI: (sotto) I'd like to see you kneel wearing a dress this tight.

DOCTOR: Shh.

ERIMEM: Rise and approach, Doctor. And you, Peri.

(Footsteps.)

ERIMEM: The Doctor and Peri have done great service to your Pharaoh and to Egypt. As thanks, Doctor, I give you this cartouche bearing my divine name. It marks you as friend of Pharaoh and under my divine protection.

DOCTOR: You do us great honour, mighty Pharaoh.

ERIMEM: Now let the banquet begin!

(Gong struck.)

ERIMEM: You will sit by Pharaoh, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Thank you.

PERI: Absolutely, your majesty.

FAYUM: Nice speech, Antranak.

ANTRANAK: This is a strange day, Fayum. An outsider sitting at Pharaoh's right hand.

FAYUM: Pharaoh makes her own decisions.

ANTRANAK: And some do not like them?

FAYUM: To say that would be to admit treason. Everyone knows that divine Pharaoh is infallible.

ANTRANAK: Not everyone shares your opinion. I know of the split in the Council of Priests.

FAYUM: Officially there is no split, only a debate.

ANTRANAK: You will have to learn to lie better than that if you want to prosper at court.

PERI: Doctor, what's with all the bug motif around the hall?

DOCTOR: The scarab beetle. Some of the priests think the beetle is sacred,

PERI: Huh, just like being at home. Mum worshipped Paul McCartney. I wish I'd brought a camera.

DOCTOR: And how would you explain it to the developer?

PERI: Never been to a toga party?

DOCTOR: Well, I was at a bash Nero threw once.

(Music starts.)

DOCTOR: Hmm, the entertainment.

PERI: Dancers. Oh, they're topless.

DOCTOR: Well, yes, I suppose they are. It's the custom. Just ignore it if it bothers you.

PERI: Easy for you to say. You're not being leached at by that black-toothed priest over there. If he asks me to dance, I'll punch him.

DOCTOR: You'll do no such thing. That's the priest of the temple of Horus. He's the chief of the Council of Priests.

PERI: Just joking. Those other topless girls, are they the next dancers?

DOCTOR: Ah, well, er, no, actually they're a different kind of entertainment. (embarrassed)

cough)

PERI: Singers? You don't mean hookers. Oh, these people need a cold shower.

DOCTOR: You may find some of their activities unusual, but remember you're seeing them from a twentieth century perspective. By this time's standards, being a palace servant, even in this capacity, is quite respectable.

ERIMEM: Are you enjoying the banquet, Doctor?

DOCTOR: Very much, your majesty, aren't we, Peri.

PERI: Having a great time.

ERIMEM: You must try the roast boar. It is absolutely excellent.

DOCTOR: Ah, why not.

(Claps hands.)

ERIMEM: Bring boar for my guests.

PERI: (sotto) Is now a good time to remind you I'm a vegetarian?

DOCTOR: (sotto) It would be a huge insult to refuse Pharaoh's recommendation. Just push it around your plate.

(Sounds of cutting.)

SLAVE: You want more boar, lady?

PERI: No thanks. Don't want to pig out. Oh, that's not meant to be a bad pig joke. Sorry.

SLAVE: Lady?

PERI: Never mind.

SLAVE: Lord?

DOCTOR: I don't mind if I do, thank you.

(Cutting. Something drops.)

DOCTOR: Careful.

SLAVE: I am sorry, lord.

ERIMEM: Our apologies, Doctor.

DOCTOR: It's all right. No harm done.

PERI: The waiter's not very good, is he.

DOCTOR: No. His clothes don't fit him. come to that.

ERIMEM: No more boar for me. I said

SLAVE: Death to Erimem!

DOCTOR: No!

PERI: Doctor!

(Struggle.)

ERIMEM: You have saved me again, Doctor.

PERI: You're bleeding.

DOCTOR: It's nothing much. Just a flesh wound really. Knife only grazed my hand.

(The slave is laughing.)

ERIMEM: Tell me what is so funny before you die.

SLAVE: Then I will not die alone. The dagger was coated with poison. He has only minutes to live.

(Breaking crockery.)

PERI: Doctor!

[Part Two]

ERIMEM: Take the Doctor to my chambers, and be gentle with him.

PERI: You're gonna be okay, Doctor. You'll get through this.

DOCTOR: Actually, Peri, I'm not feeling all that well. Oh!

ERIMEM: Antranak, torture this creature. I want to know why he tried to kill me and who sent him. Find out who dares attack Pharaoh.

SLAVE: You will learn nothing from me.

ANTRANAK: He must have taken poison himself. Already this world is slipping away from him.

PERI: Who are you? Why did you do it?

ERIMEM: Who sent you? Answer me! Who do you serve?

SLAVE: The True Pharaoh. (gasp and thud)

ANTRANAK: He is unconscious. What should we do, Pharaoh? Pharaoh?

PERI: Erimem, you have to do something.

ERIMEM: Discover what you can about this scum, then throw the corpse into the Nile. Let the crocodiles have him. I will be in my chambers. Will you accompany me, Peri?

PERI: Of course.
(Footsteps recede.)
ANTRANAK: Take this filth to be tortured.
FAYUM: Antranak.
ANTRANAK: What is it, Feyum?
FAYUM: What did the killer mean when he said the True Pharaoh?
ANTRANAK: How should I know? I'm not privy to the thoughts of killers.
FAYUM: Oh, it'll be the gossip of Thebes within the hour.
ANTRANAK: I don't doubt it.
FAYUM: Then you must discover what he meant by the True Pharaoh.
ANTRANAK: I don't need a junior priest telling me what I have to do. I have been Commander of the palace army since long before you came to the royal court.
FAYUM: I meant no disrespect, Commander.
ANTRANAK: (sighs) I know. I didn't mean to speak so harshly.
FAYUM: This last year has seen great unrest and turmoil in Egypt. The sudden death of our beloved Pharaoh coupled with the other tragedies of our royal house caused great distress to our people. This rumour will only make matters worse, *and* it will be used by those in the Council of Priests who oppose Erimem's coronation.
ANTRANAK: You will do what you can in the Council to quash this ridiculous idea.
FAYUM: Of course. Now, if you'll excuse me, I think the Doctor has need of my training as a physician.
(Footsteps. Antranak sighs.)

KISHIK: Mighty Yanis, word has come
YANIS: The Pharaoh girl is alive. I know, Kishik.
KISHIK: How can you know?
YANIS: I know everything, idiot. I knew this plan wouldn't work. At least Erimem's new champion is dead.

(Fire crackling, a man screaming.)
ANTRANAK: Talk. Tell me who sent you to kill Pharaoh at the banquet. Who is your master? You know where you are. This is the house of death. No one leaves here alive. You are going to die here today. But I am Antronak, and I am Chief of the Palace Guard. As such, the manner of your death is in my power. If you answer my questions you will die quickly and feel no more pain. You could even take pleasure with one of the temple girls before you die. You'd like that? But if you don't answer, I will have your eyes gouged from your head, your nose and ears will be shorn from your face, and then you will be castrated. I will leave your tongue in your head so that you can beg for death and tell me who sent you. Now, who is your master?
(Spits.)
ANTRONAK: You are a fool, but you will tell me in time. Priests! Set burning coals under this vermin. Perhaps fire will burn the truth from his carcase.
(The man screams.)

ERIMEM: What is the Doctor's condition, Fayum?
FAYUM: His pulse and breathing are weak, Pharaoh, like the old in their last days.
PERI: But he's going to be all right?
FAYUM: By all that I know, he should be dead already. I've seen a few cases of poisoning such as this, and none have survived as long as your friend.
ERIMEM: So he will survive?
FAYUM: I fear not, highness. There is no cure for the venom, and it is always fatal. He's unconscious now so at least he will feel no pain.
PERI: But there must be something you can do? What about antitoxins or even penicillin?
FAYUM: I don't understand, my lady.
PERI: Of course you don't. Haven't been discovered yet. Maybe if I could find the right mosses, I could make some. Oh, I don't even know if they grow here.
ERIMEM: Tend the Doctor, Fayum. Help him all you can.
FAYUM: I must attend an emergency Council meeting soon, but I have called for a more experienced healer to tend to him while I'm gone. There's something else that seems odd. I could swear I could make out the beating of two hearts in his chest.

ERIMEM: Two hearts?

PERI: Doctor? Doctor, can you hear me? Oh, come on, Doctor, you can come through this. You *have* to. You can't just leave me here!

ERIMEM: He can't hear you, Peri.

PERI: I know. I just can't believe a little scratch like that can kill him.

ERIMEM: Our people are skilled in the uses of poison.

PERI: You must be so proud.

ERIMEM: No. But it is a fact, nonetheless. Denying it will not change that.

PERI: So what do we do now, sit here and wait for the Doctor to die?

ERIMEM: You could tell me why he seems to have two hearts.

PERI: It's probably a long story.

(Knocking on door. Door opens.)

ANTRANAK: Majesty.

ERIMEM: Antranak. What have you learned?

ANTRANAK: Not as much as I would have liked, majesty. We know only that the assassin appears to have entered the palace an hour or so before the banquet began.

PERI: How did he get in? Don't you have any security here?

ANTRANAK: One of the hesets saw him coming from the Palace of Concubines. She thought he was one of the eunuchs.

ERIMEM: If he had lived, I would have made sure that he became one and *then* executed him.

PERI: Have you asked at the, what's it called?

ERIMEM: Palace of Concubines?

PERI: That's it.

ANTRANAK: That is not permitted. Other than eunuchs and the women themselves, only Pharaoh may enter.

PERI: So you're not going to question them?

ERIMEM: That would be an unacceptable breach of our laws.

PERI: I'll go. I'll find out what he was doing there.

ANTRANAK: That is not possible.

PERI: What if your Pharaoh says it is allowed?

ANTRANAK: My Pharaoh's word is law.

PERI: Erimem, your majesty, let me go into the Palace, please.

ERIMEM: Antranak, will you prepare an escort for us?

PERI: Us? You're coming with me?

ERIMEM: When I am crowned Pharaoh, I will be able to change laws as I see fit. For now, this is the only way you can enter the House of Concubines.

PERI: Okay, let's get going.

ANTRANAK: Pharaoh, I must protest.

ERIMEM: You have always been a good friend, Antranak, to my father and now to me. Please, prepare the escort.

ANTRANAK: Thank you, Pharaoh. I will arrange a guard of my most trusted men. They will be ready within the hour.

(Door opens and closes.)

ANTRANAK: Soldier, tell my personal guard to prepare themselves. They will be protecting Pharaoh herself tonight. I will join them presently.

SOLDIER: Sir.

(Footsteps.)

FAYUM: Antranak. Antranak.

ANTRANAK: Fayum? Your Council meeting finished sooner than I expected. What did they decide?

FAYUM: I'm surprised you don't know already. I'm sure your spies had their ears pressed to the door as usual. You should take care, Antranak. If your men were caught listening to the Council you could be executed. You have a great many enemies in there.

ANTRANAK: I am too long in the tooth to care for such piddling laws. Besides, my spies will have heard nothing. The doors are solid wood and thicker than one of the great stones of the pyramids. Tell me what was decided, or shall I hear it from the priest of Maat in the nearest tavern?

FAYUM: The Council decided that Erimem

ANTRANAK: The mighty Erimem

FAYUM: As you will. Cannot be crowned Pharaoh until certain questions have been answered.
(Loud buzzing!)

ANTRANAK: Even the flies feel the unrest. Go on.

FAYUM: The question of whether there can even be a female Pharaoh is a contentious one which has the Council split in half.

ANTRANAK: Who is against?

FAYUM: Horemshep is obviously the loudest opponent of the coronation, and where the priest of Horus goes

ANTRANAK: The House of Isis follows. Hmm. Who else?

FAYUM: All of those you would expect to sit in Horemshep's shadow hoping for his approval. The priests of Seth, Hathor. The rest of us believe the coronation should proceed. The Houses of Osiris and Maat spoke loudly in favour of Erimem, er, the mighty Erimem.

ANTRANAK: What of the assassin's claim?

FAYUM: That will be investigated fully. There will be no coronation until it is. That was the compromise agreed.

ANTRANAK: You would delay the coronation on the dying words of a killer?

FAYUM: I will show you why we have chosen to delay the coronation. Come with me.

(Footsteps.)

ANTRANAK: Where are we going? I have a great deal to do.

FAYUM: Just to the balcony.

(Footsteps. Murmur of voices below.)

FAYUM: There. What do you see?

ANTRANAK: Is this a game? I see Thebes. What else would I see?

FAYUM: No, look closer. We are late into the night and yet the lights still burn. The taverns and inns are still filled with people, and what do you think they're talking of? The True Pharaoh. Our people rely on this palace for leadership. They will have asked certain questions among themselves concerning Erimem's claim, and now with this they'll be confused. In the city there will be unrest. Only when this question of another claim to the throne has been investigated and dismissed can Erimem ascend the throne clear of suspicions and accusations of unworthiness.

ANTRANAK: Hmm. You may be right.

FAYUM: I think that is the first time you have ever openly agreed with me.

ANTRANAK: (amused) It's late, I'm tired, and I must be getting old. And I'll try not to let it happen again.

FAYUM: (laughing) Please do. I would hate for both of our reputations to be tarnished.

ANTRANAK: I doubt anyone's opinion of you could fall any lower.

FAYUM: And I doubt their opinion of you is particularly high after your troops let a murderer into the palace.

(Intermittent insect buzzing under the dialogue.)

ANTRANAK: I know that. Oh, damn flies.

FAYUM: How are your investigations proceeding?

ANTRANAK: Steadily. We are making progress.

FAYUM: And the mighty Erimem, is she safe?

ANTRANAK: I must join her soon. She's planning to visit the Palace of Concubines. As safe a place as any in the palace.

FAYUM: I hope so. Now I wonder if anywhere is safe. Everything seems so uncertain now, even here in the palace of Pharaoh herself.

ANTRANAK [OC]: The palace is more secure than it has ever been.

YANIS: A lie, and you know it.

KISHIK: Great Yanis

YANIS: Be gone, Kishik. I will not be disturbed by anyone.

KISHIK: As you command.

YANIS: Now, where were we? Speak up, idiots.

ANTRANAK [OC]: I do not question Pharaoh's actions.

FAYUM [OC]: Is she going perhaps to investigate the rumours that the assassin was seen coming from there?

ANTRANAK [OC]: Pharaoh need not explain herself to anyone. Besides, how could I stop her?

Her will is law.

YANIS: (laughs) And soon her body'll be fed to the jackals.

ANTRANAK: I should be returning to Pharaoh now. Oh, damn this fly. (smack) Oh, missed.

(Clang, clang.)

ANTRANAK: Ah!

FAYUM: A sword to squash a fly, Antranak? Now I *know* we are safe,

ANTRANAK: It made me feel better, Fayum. Now, tend to the Doctor and we'll talk later.

YANIS: Ah, you did well, my little friend. You let me hear enough.

(Beep, boop.)

YANIS: Incredible device. What other marvels are hidden here, I wonder? Kishik!

(Tent flap pushed aside.)

KISHIK: Lord Yanis?

YANIS: Prepare the troops. We surround Thebes immediately.

KISHIK: As you command, my lord. But surely their armies will sight us before we get near the city?

YANIS: Of course they will. But an army mourning the tragic death of that virgin brat Erimem will have no stomach for fighting. It'll be a glorious slaughter.

KISHIK: Erimem is dead?

YANIS: Not yet, but soon. Very soon. Prepare the troops.

(Kishik leaves. More pressing of buttons.)

YANIS: I must alert more of our smallest soldiers to their great task.

ANTRANAK: Halt. Majesty, we are here. I will rouse the Palace of Concubines.

PERI: It's enormous. How many women are in here?

ERIMEM: My father had over sixty wives when he died.

(Knocking on door.)

ERIMEM: Brides of my divine fathers, we ask permission to enter.

PERI: Nobody home?

ANTRANAK: I believe I know the reason for the delay, majesty. One of the palace women was found dead a few hours ago by her own hand.

ERIMEM: Was it Rubak, Antranak?

ANTRANAK: No, majesty. Your mother is well. But like the other women she is in mourning for Varela.

ERIMEM: Varela?

PERI: You knew her?

ERIMEM: She tended me when I was a child.

PERI: Why did she kill herself, Antranak?

ANTRANAK: I don't know. They say she had been quiet these last few days. Today she took scorpion venom while sitting in the gardens.

ERIMEM: I am growing weary of these mysteries, but under the circumstances perhaps we should let the women mourn tonight.

PERI: I don't want to seem harsh, but we still need to know what the killer was doing in there.

ERIMEM: Antranak?

ANTRANAK: She is right. We do need answers, highness.

PERI: If we wait, it might be too late to help the Doctor.

ERIMEM: You are right. We will mourn Verella later.

PERI: Besides, one of the women could slip away.

ERIMEM: Impossible. There is only one exit from this palace.

ANTRANAK: Actually, great one, there is a second. It dates back hundreds of years. Very few know of its existence.

PERI: Show us.

ANTRANAK: I would, but I may not enter.

(Knocks on door.)

ANTRANAK: Women, open your doors for Pharaoh! Erimemushinteperem, daughter of light.

(Door unbolted and creaks open.)

ANTRANAK: You took your time.

(The man makes mmph noises.)

PERI: He's here now. Don't scare him to death.
ANTRANAK: You know of the hidden exit from the palace?
MUTE: Mmph.
PERI: Show us where it is.
ERIMEM: Peri, wait.
PERI: What?
ERIMEM: I must enter first. If you had gone ahead of me, your life would be forfeit.
PERI: Okay. After you.
(Footsteps.)
ANTRANAK: Hear me, girl. My Pharaoh may be walking into danger to help you enter this palace. I'll hold *you* responsible for her safety. If any harm comes to her you will answer to me. Remember that.
PERI: If you had done your job properly, we wouldn't have to be going in here. *You* remember that.
ERIMEM: Peri?
PERI: Coming.
ANTRANAK: My troops will wait for you, Pharaoh.
(Door creaks closed.)
PERI: Which way?
MUTE: Mmph.
ERIMEM: Show us.

(Women wailing.)
ERIMEM: The women weep for Varela.
PERI: It's probably best that we look at this other exit first and talk to them later.
ERIMEM: I think that is wise. Their tears make me uncomfortable too.
PERI: I thought it was just me. Do you want to see your mother while we're here?
ERIMEM: More than I can say. But I have seen her weep enough, recently. How far to the entrance?
MUTE: Mmph.
PERI: Is everyone this talkative?
ERIMEM: The slave's tongue was cut from his head after he was taken in battle.
PERI: And he's a eunuch as well? Poor guy.
MUTE: Mmph.
(Footsteps.)
PERI: This is it? I don't see anything.
ERIMEM: As it should be.
(Grating of stones.)
ERIMEM: The exit is hidden, put here in case invaders took the palace.
PERI: We'll need torches. These two will do. Perhaps we should go back and collect some of your palace guards?
ERIMEM: The only men who can enter here are eunuchs, remember? I cannot foresee many of my troops volunteering for *that* duty.
PERI: Good point. Er, I mean, good point, your majesty.
ERIMEM: Please, do not worry about any title. Life is much simpler and easier if people just call me Erimem.
PERI: That won't get my head cut off or anything? I'm allergic to decapitation. It's bad for the circulation.
ERIMEM: (laughs) You are a strange one, Peri, but that is good. I hope I can call you a friend.
PERI: Who am I to say no to a Pharaoh?
ERIMEM: Wait here, slave.
MUTE: Mmph.
ERIMEM: If we do not return by dawn, send guards after us and let Seth take our traditions.
PERI: Lots of guards. Big ones with plenty of weapons.
MUTE: Mmph, mmph.
(Stone scrapes.)

(Pestle and mortar.)
FAYUM: I wish I could identify the poison which has taken you, Doctor. Pharaoh has told me to find a cure, but I'm not sure if I can. Of course, if I don't, you'll die. Pharaoh will be unhappy.

Antranak will be unhappy because Pharaoh is unhappy, and so I will naturally become somewhat more unhappy, and then. Doctor? Doctor, mmph, oh.
(Breaking pottery.)

ERIMEM: These passages must be almost five hundred years old.

PERI: Kind of creepy, aren't they. Claustrophobic.

ERIMEM: I do feel a certain unease.

PERI: These tapestries are amazing. The needlework is so intricate, but from the way the colours have faded they must be decades old. More, maybe.

ERIMEM: The women must have made them up above and decorated the passages with them.

PERI: To make them homey, just in case? Have to say, I don't think it's working.

ERIMEM: There is the doorway.

PERI: The dust on the floor. Footprints. There's just one set of tracks, heading up the way we came, so it wasn't someone coming down here from the palace. I bet my last buck those are the assassin's footprints from when he came in. Er, can we talk about something else for a while?.

(Walking.)

ERIMEM: Tell me about you and the Doctor, Peri. Have you been married long?

PERI: What? We're not married.

ERIMEM: Are you his concubine, then? Or a slave?

PERI: I'm no slave, and I'm certainly nobody's concubine. The Doctor and I are friends, that's all.

ERIMEM: Really? That is extraordinary.

PERI: What, men and women can't be friends here?

ERIMEM: No. A woman's place is to serve her man.

PERI: That's so prehistoric.

ERIMEM: I, I don't understand.

PERI: I'm sorry. I keep forgetting where, *when* I am. It's just that things are different where I come from.

ERIMEM: Really? Tell me, who rules you?

PERI: Well, every four years the public decided who's gonna run the country.

ERIMEM: The ordinary people? All of them?

PERI: Everybody, as long as they're adult, not in jail or mad. Well, then again.

ERIMEM: Amazing! Tell me

PERI: Do you mind if I ask you how you came to be Pharaoh? I thought they were all men.

ERIMEM: Usually they are, and I think most of my Council of Priests believe that only men should be Pharaoh.

PERI: Oh, rubbish. A woman can rule just as well as a man. Look at Margaret Thatcher. Okay, maybe that's a bad example. Indira Ghandi.

ERIMEM: I do not understand, but I thank you anyway. A year ago I wouldn't have believed this possible.

PERI: Why?

ERIMEM: Back then I was little Princess Erimem. I was sixteen years old, but to everyone I was still the little girl whose nose they had wiped. My father was Pharaoh and my three older half-brothers were more important than me, so I was left to my own devices.

PERI: What happened?

ERIMEM: First, my eldest brother was killed when the axle of his chariot snapped. It rolled over and landed on him.

PERI: I'm sorry.

ERIMEM: So am I. I think we were to be married one day.

PERI: Your brother?

ERIMEM: It is tradition. The royal line must be kept pure. But first he died, and then a fever took my younger brother less than a month later. The last of my brothers was bitten by an asp inside his own rooms at the palace. He fought the poison for five days before it took him. I think a little of my father died with each of his sons. I wasn't surprised when he died six months after my eldest brother, only that he allowed himself to be ambushed by mercenaries while out in his chariot. But he had been taking chances like he had never done before, as if he did not care any more.

PERI: I'm sorry, really.

ERIMEM: Thank you. Now my only living relation is my mother, but she thinks I'm a god and will not look me in the face. She can barely talk to me.

PERI: What do you think?

ERIMEM: I think that a god would not have needed the Doctor to save her life twice in less than a day. And a god would not feel as afraid as I feel now.

PERI: If it's any consolation, you're not alone there. Hey. Hey, it's broadening out.

ERIMEM: At last.

PERI: What is it?

ERIMEM: A chapel for the woman to worship their gods.

PERI: More tapestries. And if my stepfather saw that altar, he'd think he was in heaven. He could get years of work out of the inscriptions alone.

ERIMEM: It reaches back to the First Dynasty.

PERI: Can you hear that?

ERIMEM: What?

PERI: Listen. That's the wind, right? Except there's no wind down here.

ERIMEM: (gasps) There, at the door!

PERI: Oh, my God! Scorpions!

ERIMEM: Hundreds of them!

PERI: Thousands! They're everywhere! They're swarming.

ERIMEM: They've blocked the doorway. We're trapped!

PERI: Quick, hop on the altar.

ERIMEM: That would be sacrilege.

PERI: Better than the last rites. Come on. Climb up.

(Effort.)

PERI: I've never seen anything like this. I thought scorpions were solitary animals.

ERIMEM: They are. They even hate their own kind. Put two together and they will fight until one is dead.

PERI: They're not fighting now. Can they climb?

ERIMEM: I have never seen them do so.

PERI: That's something. Oh.

ERIMEM: What?

PERI: They're climbing up on top of each other, like they're making a ramp.

ERIMEM: I don't believe it. It will only take a few minutes for them to reach us.

PERI: This isn't right. They shouldn't be acting like this. They shouldn't be smart enough to do this.

ERIMEM: They're almost here!

PERI: How thick are those tapestries?

ERIMEM: They're made of the hardest wearing wools.

PERI: It's probably sacrilege as well. Grab the other end and pull.

ERIMEM: It is stuck.

PERI: Pull harder! Pull!

(Tearing sound.)

ERIMEM: It's free.

PERI: Throw it over the scorpions.

ERIMEM: You want us to run over the top of them?

PERI: Do you have a better idea? Come on.

(Crunching noises.)

ERIMEM: Oh, this is horrible. The tapestry doesn't reach the door.

PERI: It's just a few feet. We'll have to jump. Oh, made it.

ERIMEM: They're following us.

PERI: And they're blocking the way back. We'll have to follow the passage to the other way out.

ERIMEM: But we don't know what will be waiting for us there.

PERI: Can't be any worse than what's behind us.

ERIMEM: I believe you have a point.

PERI: This way, I think.

YANIS: Damn those witches. They have escaped!

KISHIK: My lord?

(Strangled sounds.)

YANIS: (effort) Did I give you leave to speak, vermin?

(Released. Kishik coughs.)

YANIS: These Egyptian milksops are weak with their women, letting them run free doing the work of men. I'll show those women how they should be treated before I gut them and throw them to the crocodiles. Why are we not surrounding Thebes now!

(Running feet stop.)

ERIMEM: Is that light ahead?

PERI: I hope so. The torches are almost dead. Still, they've done their job. We've outrun the scorpions.

(Unbolting door.)

(Outside.)

PERI: Oh, it's morning.

ERIMEM: I have never seen a more beautiful sunrise.

PERI: Me either. Where are we?

ERIMEM: Give me a moment. Ah, there is the palace. We must be at the base of the western hills.

PERI: Oh, I wish we'd worn something warmer than these dresses. It's freezing out in the open.

ERIMEM: The walk will soon warm us. There, I think I see the market opening in the city.

(A man screams in pain as he is whipped.)

HOREMSHEP: (intoning) Is this the slave who tried to murder our Pharaoh? Has he spoken?

GUARD: No, Lord Horemshep. He is

SLAVE: My lord.

HOREMSHEP: Shh. Quietly. Don't be encouraged by my presence here, poor, poor fool. You're in no condition to escape. And I'm afraid you can't be interrogated either.

(The slave groans.)

HOREMSHEP: After all, no one leaves the House of Death alive.

(Lots of people.)

PERI: My mum would have a field day here.

ERIMEM: How much are the dates?

SELLER: (scared) Nothing. Nothing, great one.

ERIMEM: I would not deprive you of your livelihood. One of my handmaidens will bring your payment later. Peri?

PERI: Thanks. I've never tried these for breakfast before. Can I ask a question?

ERIMEM: Please.

PERI: How do you deal with all this, the bowing and stuff.

ERIMEM: Not very well, apparently. My father was always scolding me for not being regal enough. I shudder to think what he would say if he could see me now, walking among the people like a commoner. But I do wish he was here. Then I would not have this burden of duty on me.

PERI: For what it's worth, you may just have invented one of the most important political concepts ever. Working the people. Oh, there's Antranak. Looks like we've been spotted.

ERIMEM: A pity. I could learn to like walking through the market like a normal person.

ANTRANAK: Great Pharaoh, you are safe.

ERIMEM: Obviously.

PERI: We're both safe. Thanks for asking.

ANTRANAK: When you did not return, I sent dozens of men into the catacombs. They found only

PERI: Scorpions? We know. Can I see the Doctor?

ERIMEM: Antranak, escort us to my chambers.

ANTRANAK: As you command.

PERI: How is he?

ANTRANAK: Fayum is with him. When I last heard, the Doctor's condition had not changed. Still unconscious.

PERI: But not dead. He's not dead.

ANTRANAK: Not as far as I know, although
PERI: Although what?
ERIMEM: Tell us, old friend.
ANTRANAK: I fear there are those in this city who would see him dead.
PERI: Why? We only just got here.
ANTRANAK: The royal court is a viper's nest. That Pharaoh has shown the Doctor and you favour makes some of the court worry as to how secure their positions are. I know a number who would think nothing of removing him, whatever it took.
PERI: You included?
ANTRANAK: I am loyal to my Pharaoh.
ERIMEM: And I am grateful. We are here.
(Door opens.)
PERI: I hope he's okay.
(Footsteps.)
PERI: Where is he?
ANTRANAK: Fayum? Fayum!
ERIMEM: He's not here.
PERI: Where is he?
ANTRANAK: I left him here.
PERI: He's not here now. Doctor? Doctor?
ERIMEM: Antranak, how can the Doctor have disappeared?
ANTRANAK: I, er, but I
ERIMEM: I ordered that the Doctor be attended at all times. What happened?
ANTRANAK: I will find out, majesty.
PERI: Doctor, where are you?
ANTRANAK: I fear his whereabouts are of little importance. By now the poison will have run its course. He is dead.

[Part Three]

(Chariot.)
FAYUM: Sir, this is most unusual.
DOCTOR: By now you've probably worked out that I'm a most unusual fellow, Fayum.
FAYUM: Doctor, no ordinary man could survive the venom you were poisoned with, much less get up suddenly as if from sleep and ask for breakfast.
DOCTOR: Yes. Sorry about scaring you like that. There, on the horizon. Smoke from camp fires. A good sized camp by the look of it. Pull the chariot into the oasis over there. I'll go on foot from here.
FAYUM: I must go with you.
DOCTOR: I'd rather go alone. It's bound to be dangerous.
FAYUM: Pharaoh charged me with your well-being. I cannot leave you alone.
DOCTOR: I assume I'd be wasting my time to try and change your mind. Very well.

ERIMEM: Don't worry, Peri. We will find him.
PERI: But will he still be alive?
ERIMEM: He is strong, I'm sure
ANTRANAK: Great Pharaoh.
ERIMEM: What is it, Antranak?
PERI: You've found the Doctor?
ANTRANAK: Alas not, but our scouts have spied the army of mercenaries. They have surrounded Thebes to the south and west. They have sent a message demanding that we surrender immediately or they will kill every man, woman and child in Egypt.
ERIMEM: Our troops?
ANTRANAK: Footsoldiers and chariots of the army stand ready, as do my palace guard.
ERIMEM: And the temple's troops. Antranak, tell me.
ANTRANAK: The Council of Priests is split over committing its troops.
PERI: Oh, that's crazy.
ANTRANAK: Perhaps. But once Erimem, forgive me, Pharaoh has led our troops in battle the deliberations of the Council concerning her right to the throne will be worthless. The people will

never allow a victorious Pharaoh to be deposed.

PERI: So they'd rather see their city destroyed by mercenaries than see Erimem crowned Pharaoh?

ERIMEM: I do not think so, Peri. They are wily and cunning. They have waited like jackals for the moment to strike at me. Now we shall see their plan.

ANTRANAK: The Council has asked that you attend the emergency council meeting which sits as we speak.

ERIMEM: They summon *me*, like I were a common serving girl?

PERI: I didn't think anyone could order a Pharaoh to do anything. They must be feeling confident.

ANTRANAK: It is an outrage. Give me the word, and my men will cut the cabal of weasels into feed for the palace dogs.

ERIMEM: No. Tell the priests that I will attend.

ANTRANAK: But

ERIMEM: Do it, Antranak. Or will I have someone else deliver the message?

ANTRANAK: No, highness. I will do it. But they will regret this insult, I swear it.

(Walking on rocky ground.)

DOCTOR: The Nile's east and they have Thebes surrounded to the south and the west. Why not the north, I wonder? Unless you have a garrison to the north?

FAYUM: A large one, at Giza.

DOCTOR: Ah, I thought so. Whoever's in charge of this lot isn't stupid. If he'd sent men to the north, they might have been sandwiched between the troops in Thebes and the garrison at Giza.

FAYUM: We're lucky his men aren't so alert. I can hardly believe we slipped through their lines so easily.

DOCTOR: Men who fight for money tend to be less attentive to duty than those who fight for honour or their beliefs. Now, I'd guess that the camp is just over these dunes. Ah, there it is. Keep your head down.

FAYUM: There must be thousands of mercenaries for the camp to be this size.

DOCTOR: Well, look on the bright side. Most of them are already in position to attack the city, so they won't be here to worry about us.

FAYUM: That's the bright side?

DOCTOR: If they're in position, I can't help wondering why they haven't attacked yet. Ah, that big tent at the centre must be their leader's. Come on. I want to look inside.

FAYUM: Wouldn't it be wiser to fetch help?

DOCTOR: Undoubtedly, but I've got this terrible feeling in my mind. Never mind. We'll skirt the dunes as best we can. Stay low. A guard. Down. All right, come on.

FAYUM: You move like a spirit, Doctor. I did not think we would live this long.

DOCTOR: I'm a little surprised myself. I thought the camp would be better guarded.

MERCENARY: 'Ere, who are you?

DOCTOR: Why can't I keep my mouth shut?

(Whoosh, thud, gurgle.)

DOCTOR: Fayum, was that absolutely necessary?

FAYUM: He would have raised the alarm.

DOCTOR: From now on, use that bow only as a last resort. I came here to avoid bloodshed, not start it.

FAYUM: I do not understand you, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Just get that guard out of sight before he's spotted. He'll be missed before long. We'll have to look sharp. Quickly, now. This is the one. It's empty. Inside.

FAYUM: Look at these jewels, Doctor, from all the corners of the world. And so much gold.

DOCTOR: Evidently crime does pay. Spoils of previous campaigns, no doubt.

FAYUM: Doctor, the blood on this armour.

DOCTOR: Hmm, still fresh. This is interesting. Battlefield tents don't usually have a second room. I wonder what's through here? Very interesting indeed.

(Tent flap moved.)

FAYUM: Urgh, that stench. It's like rotting meat.

DOCTOR: I'm rather afraid it is. Human meat. Corpses behind this metal block. It must be a shrine of some kind.

FAYUM: Human sacrifice? Some of these are wearing the uniforms of our chariot squadron. This is no way for men to die. Look at them, left for the insects to feed on. Their souls will never find rest.

DOCTOR: This metal block must be an altar. The markings are rather unusual though. So's the metal, come think of it. Definitely an alloy not developed yet.

(Insect chittering starts. Sound of metal on metal.)

DOCTOR: Let's have a proper look. Oh, no. I've seen all I need to, Fayum. Time we were going.

FAYUM: What did you take from the altar?

DOCTOR: This is no time for a discussion. Go!

(Tent flap opens.)

YANIS: Leaving already? You've barely sampled my hospitality.

DOCTOR: If what's through there is any indication of how you treat guests, I'll pass, if it's all the same to you.

YANIS: You must be the fair-haired giant who saved Erimem.

FAYUM: Show respect when you speak of Pharaoh.

YANIS: Did I give you leave to speak?

(Whip crack. Fayum cries out.)

YANIS: Did I give you leave to bleed?

(Whip crack.)

YANIS: Or to fall over?

DOCTOR: And who gave you leave to slaughter those men through there?

YANIS: Interesting. You are in my tent, in the middle of *my* camp, surrounded by thousands of *my* men, yet you do not fear me? You should. You really should.

DOCTOR: Perhaps. But you should fear what you found in that stasis box through there.

YANIS: Stasis box?

DOCTOR:: Yes, you're using it as an altar.

YANIS: What do you know of such things, dog?

DOCTOR: Doctor, actually, and I know it's best not to interfere with a stasis box when you find one. Especially ones with prison markings on them.

YANIS: You know a great deal more than you should.

DOCTOR: So I've been told.

YANIS: You're a dangerous enemy, Doctor. Too dangerous to remain alive. I shall take great pleasure in killing you personally.

DOCTOR: Really. Danger's all in the mind, surely? But then, I imagine you've got rather a lot on your mind these days. Your thoughts, other people's thoughts.

YANIS: What do you mean?

DOCTOR: I had rather a long nap last night. My mind went wandering, and it sensed a presence nearby. A strong telepathic presence. The entity you discovered in the stasis box. Do you know exactly what it is?

YANIS: Power. Power over men, over their minds. The power to rule the world!

DOCTOR: Yes, but who'll be ruling you, I wonder?

YANIS: No one rules Yanis. I am Warlord and I will have this world at my feet.

DOCTOR: Rather lofty ambitions for a third rate bully.

YANIS: I will cut your heart out, and you will live just long enough to see me feast on it.

DOCTOR: Not today, thank you. We'll be going, if it's all the same to you.

YANIS: You have courage, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I also have a little something I picked up from your stasis box.

YANIS: What is that?

DOCTOR: You don't know, do you. I imagine the presence in your mind recognises it. A telepathic inhibitor's core circuits. A little bashed up, but nothing that can't be mended by someone who knows what they're doing.

(Beep, boop.)

YANIS: Stop! Put it down!

DOCTOR: The little voice in your head getting nervous? Don't worry, it's perfectly harmless in the long run. But if I do this.

(Beep! Yanis is in pain.)

DOCTOR: It does rather tend to disorient telepaths for a while.

FAYUM: Let me kill him.

DOCTOR: There's no time for that. Come on. Come on!

(Lots of men screaming.)

DOCTOR: It's got a better range than I anticipated, but the effects won't last for ever. Quickly, we'll take one of their chariots.

FAYUM: Hold on. Yah! Yah.

(Chariot rattles off.)

YANIS: Up. On your feet. Up, before I grind your legs into the dirt! After them! Do whatever you have to, but bring me the fair one alive. No one kills him but me. I will do it with my bare hands.

FAYUM: We're through their lines.

DOCTOR: We're not free yet. I can make out three, no four chariots following us.

FAYUM: We have got a head start, but they are more experienced with these chariots than I am.

DOCTOR: We're still well out of range of their archers. Head for the oasis. Our own chariot is faster than this one and the horses will be fresher. They won't catch us.

FAYUM: Yah! (whip crack) Faster, faster!

DOCTOR: Home, James, and never mind the horses. Never mind.

ANTRANAK: My Queen, it is almost time.

ERIMEM: I know, Antranak. We had better not keep the priests waiting. Peri, will you come with me?

PERI: I thought I might go and look for the Doctor again, but I guess you could do with a friend where you're going.

ERIMEM: Thank you. Lead the way, Antranak.

YANIS: Well, Kishik, are the men in position?

KISHIK: Exactly as you commanded, Lord Yanis.

YANIS: Order them to hold position.

KISHIK: Hold? I thought we were to attack.

YANIS: Are you as deaf as you are ugly and stupid? Hold! There are many ways to win a battle. Our ally in the city will try his way first.

KISHIK: And if he fails?

YANIS: Then the Nile will run scarlet as Thebes drowns in torrents of its own blood. What a magnificent thought!

(Door creaks open. Footsteps.)

ANTRANAK: Daughter of the most high divine Pharaoh, link to the living gods, Pharaoh in waiting Erimemushinteperem, light of the

ERIMEM: Everyone here knows who I am, Antranak, and we have little enough time as it is. I'm glad you came, Peri. I think I have few friends in this room.

PERI: They look like a pack of vultures.

ERIMEM: Who summoned Pharaoh as if she were a slave?

HOREMSHEP: I did, highness.

ANTRANAK: Horemshep. I hoped you would know better.

ERIMEM: Let him speak. I trust that you have a good reason for your actions, Horemshep.

HOREMSHEP: I believe that I do. Pharaoh is Egypt, and Egypt is Pharaoh. Our land needs the rule of Pharaoh, the living god. Pharaoh rules all of our lives.

PERI: That's why you called her like a dog?

HOREMSHEP: Since the passing of her divine father, we have all believed that the Princess Erimem was the only heir to the throne of Pharaoh. But there is a doubt as to the right of a daughter to claim the position of Pharaoh, which has caused a delay in Erimem's coronation. Many days we have debated long into the night.

ANTRANAK: Drunk long into the night, more like.

PERI: And there have been female Pharaohs before.

HOREMSHEP: But that changed when the assassin stated that there was another claim to the throne.

ERIMEM: Does the Council often listen to the claims of murderers, Horemshep?

HOREMSHEP: No, but this claim was too important to be ignored. So we ordered an investigation.

PERI: You've found something already? That's quick work, Jack.

HOREMSHEP: Who is this concubine?

ERIMEM: Peri is *my* friend. She speaks with me. Answer us, Horemshep. What is your evidence?

HOREMSHEP: The proof was given to us by those who sought to hide it from Egypt. News of our investigation caused them to make a fatal mistake, by murdering an innocent woman in the Palace of Concubines.

PERI: Varela was murdered? We assumed she committed suicide.

HOREMSHEP: We have proof, and motive as well. The poison she took was very rare. Few in the city possess the skills required in its production and use. Tell us, Antranak. Who in the palace understands the venoms of the serpents?

ANTRANAK: The priests of the snake gods, apothecaries and a few others.

HOREMSHEP: Including certain of your guards?

ANTRANAK: We have experts in the venoms, but, but wait. Are you saying that one of *my* men killed Varela? If you are, your proof had better be undeniable, or priest or not, you will answer to me.

HOREMSHEP: I do not accuse one of your *men*, Antranak. I accuse you of the murder of Varela.

(Murmurs of astonishment.)

HOREMSHEP: Of the murder of Varela and conspiring to keep the true Pharaoh of the Two Lands of Egypt from the throne!

ERIMEM: Antranak?

ANTRANAK: Lies. All lies, from that weasel. I'll kill him with my bare hands.

HOREMSHEP: Hold him!

ANTRANAK: Release me! Let me go.

PERI: I don't believe it. Erimem. Erimem? Pharaoh?

ERIMEM: I know Antranak is protective of me. He has been ever since I was a child. And I heard him threaten you at the Palace of Concubines although I pretended not to. But he would not do this, surely. No, I don't believe it either, and yet I know he will do anything to protect me.

(Door creaks open. Footsteps. Muttering.)

FAYUM: Let him pass. He carries the cartouche of Pharaoh.

DOCTOR: Sorry to barge in like this. Have we missed anything?

PERI: Doctor! You're all right!

DOCTOR: Yes, I will be if you let go. You're crushing my ribs.

PERI: I thought you were dead.

HOREMSHEP: (sotto) As did we all.

DOCTOR: No, thanks. I've tried death a few times. Can't say I care for it much.

PERI: But the poison?

DOCTOR: My body just put me into a deep sleep while it worked the poison from my system. Best night's sleep I've had for centuries.

HOREMSHEP: Alive or dead, you have no place here, stranger.

ERIMEM: The Doctor is also here as my counsel. Join us, Doctor.

DOCTOR: I'm honoured, Pharaoh. So, what's this all about?

PERI: Horemshep's accused Antranak of poisoning a concubine to make sure she didn't tell anyone Erimem isn't really heir to the throne.

DOCTOR: Really? Has he said who is?

PERI: Not yet.

DOCTOR: Interesting timing for this to happen. Majesty, may I ask a few questions?

ERIMEM: Of course.

DOCTOR: Horemshep, what proof do you have against Antranak?

HOREMSHEP: As I have already stated, there are only a handful of people within the palace with the expertise to handle such a rare venom as killed Varela. The rooms and houses of everyone with that expertise were investigated by my palace guard.

DOCTOR: And the poison was found in Antranak's chambers?

HOREMSHEP: A vial, with just enough missing to have killed Varela.

DOCTOR: How did he give the poison to Varela? As I recall, men aren't allowed in the Palace of Concubines.

HOREMSHEP: Antranak knows all the secret entrances and passages in Thebes. Even

yesterday, he told Erimem of the existence of a secret passage. And he was seen moving away from the Palace of Concubines only an hour before the Lady Varela was found dead in the gardens.

ANTRANAK: It's my duty to oversee security there.

HOREMSHEP: Is it your duty to murder innocent women!

DOCTOR: So let me get this right. Antranak slipped into the Palace of Concubines, poisoned the Lady Varela, and then went back to his own chambers and hid the incriminating evidence there, ready for your guards to find. Careless of him. Almost unbelievably so.

HOREMSHEP: Do you call me a liar, outsider?

DOCTOR: No. No, no, no, no. Absolutely not. Well, not yet. Why would an intelligent man like Antranak leave the poison in his own rooms? Why not simply throw it in the Nile, or put it in someone else's chambers to incriminate an innocent, for instance?

HOREMSHEP: Ask him yourself.

DOCTOR: I'd rather ask you. And I'd be interested in knowing who ordered the search of Antranak's quarters. It wouldn't have been *you* by any chance, would it?

HOREMSHEP: It was a Council decision.

DOCTOR: Then whose idea? Yours? Yes. Interesting. The other question is why. Why would Antranak kill an innocent woman? If he had a motive, let's hear it.

HOREMSHEP: Who are you to speak to Horemshep, Priest of Horus, leader of the Council

DOCTOR: I am someone seeking the truth. Who are you? Motive, if you don't mind.

HOREMSHEP: The reason for this cruel murder was discovered in the personal belongings of the Lady Varela. As we know, she was a wife of our beloved Pharaoh, who travelled to the west only a season ago. Among her possessions were letters written to her by her great husband.

DOCTOR: That's hardly surprising. What was in the letters that was important enough to cost Varela her life?

HOREMSHEP: The letters told of Varela's love for her husband, of her devotion to him, and of the son she bore him in secret!

(Astonishment.)

ERIMEM: A brother?

PERI: And he would claim the throne just because he's male.

ERIMEM: By law all male children are ahead of females in the line of succession.

HOREMSHEP: Pharaoh fathered another son, older by three years than Erimem, and the true Pharaoh of Egypt. As a so-called friend of Pharaoh, Antranak knew of the child and sought to keep his existence secret, so that Erimem could rule as Pharaoh with his counsel.

ANTRANAK: Lies, all of it.

HOREMSHEP: Antranak has betrayed his duty to Egypt and the trust of his Pharaoh!

DOCTOR: I don't suppose you happen to know where this Pharaoh is?

HOREMSHEP: He is here, Doctor, in this room.

DOCTOR: I thought he might me. You'd better tell us who he is, before the crowd gets restless.

HOREMSHEP: Taken from Varela at birth, he was raised by one of the priests as one of his own. It is ironic that he and Erimem played together as children. He recently entered this Council as a respected junior member, but now we will serve him. Fayum is the true Pharaoh!

FAYUM: What?

HOREMSHEP: Step forward, mighty Fayum, and take the throne!

FAYUM: No, you're wrong. I'm not Pharaoh. I'm just a priest.

HOREMSHEP: You are the son of a living god. You are our most high Pharaoh.

FAYUM: I'm nothing. I don't want to be Pharaoh. Get your hands off! Get your hands off me!

HOREMSHEP: Embrace your destiny. This is what you were born for.

FAYUM: My head feels. There's something, a voice. Voices.

DOCTOR: So that's how it works.

HOREMSHEP: You have a duty, great Fayum. You know what you must do.

FAYUM: I know what must be done.

ANTRANAK: Fayum, what is this nonsense?

HOREMSHEP: Step down, Erimem. Step down and kneel before the true Pharaoh, the mighty Fayum, ruler of the Two Lands of Egypt! Kneel, all of you! Move, girl, or be moved.

DOCTOR: Stay where you are, Erimem. Is this the best proof you have, Horemshep? A bottle of poison and some old letters? Hardly conclusive, are they?

HOREMSHEP: They are enough.

DOCTOR: And jolly lucky for you that they were just lying about.

HOREMSHEP: The gods favour us by showing us the truth!

FAYUM: This is indeed the truth.

DOCTOR: Really? Fayum. I must say you've changed your tune. One moment you don't want to be Pharaoh, the next you have to do your duty. You've changed your mind quickly. And literally too, I imagine.

HOREMSHEP: You have interfered enough. Stand aside or be killed.

DOCTOR: Why doesn't Fayum move me?

FAYUM: As you wish. (effort) What are you?

DOCTOR: More than a match for Fayum, it seems. Mind over matter, wouldn't you say?

HOREMSHEP: Guards, kill him!

DOCTOR: Wait! I can prove that Erimem is the true Pharaoh.

HOREMSHEP: You lie!

DOCTOR: I leave that to the experts. You claim your proof is from the gods. Then let the gods choose who should be Pharaoh.

HOREMSHEP: The gods have chosen!

DOCTOR: Ask Ra, the sun god, if he favours Fayum.

ERIMEM: Peri, what is he doing?

PERI: I don't know. Doctor?

DOCTOR: Shh, Peri.

PERI: But

DOCTOR: Look, this is a telepathic inhibitor circuit. If I just reverse the inhibitor cache control. There we are.

PERI: Doctor

DOCTOR: Quiet. I need to concentrate. Now, get him to ask the question.

PERI: Ask your god, Horemshep. Or are you scared of the answer?

HOREMSHEP: Great Ra, bringer of life, shine your favour on the true living god, Fayum!

(A scream. Consternation.)

PRIEST: Ra is gone. The sky is dark. Ra has abandoned Fayum.

DOCTOR: Erimem, command the sun to return.

ERIMEM: Doctor, I cannot

DOCTOR: Do it. I can't keep this up much longer.

PERI: Trust him, please. Do it.

ERIMEM: Very well. Great Ra, return to our skies. Bring light and life back to our lands.

(Gasps of relief.)

PRIEST: Ra has returned. Only a living god can command the sun.

ERIMEM: I don't believe it.

HOREMSHEP: Don't believe them! It's a trick!

(Chants of Erimem, Erimem.)

PERI: What was that, an eclipse?

DOCTOR: Not quite. You remember when the Tardis was jolted and I said I'd reprogrammed it?

PERI: Yes.

DOCTOR: I just did, telepathically. I reversed these inhibitor circuits I found in the enemy's tent to extend my range a little. Rather a useful bit of equipment. At least now we know who brought us here.

PERI: You had the Tardis block out the sun? Can it do that?

DOCTOR: You've no idea what the Tardis can do when she has a mind to. She'd get to just the right distance for the right effect and so long as it wasn't for more than a few seconds, well, instant eclipse.

PERI: All that shaking about in the Tardis earlier, the heat. That was just now?

DOCTOR: Yes. We're here and then we were just up there, too.

PERI: I think Horemshep's going to have a fit, by the way.

HOREMSHEP: It's a trick! A lie!

DOCTOR: The lies are yours, Horemshep. You had Varela poisoned. She was an easy target, a woman depressed and distressed by the death of her husband. He would easily trust the priest of Horus. You forged the letters found in her rooms. You planted the evidence on Antranak. You even arranged for the assassination attempt on Erimem so that you could put Fayum or anyone else you could manipulate, on the throne. Then what? Murder Fayum and take the throne for yourself with the help of mercenaries outside the city.

ERIMEM: Release Antranak.

ANTRANAK: Traitorous dog. The beetles will eat you alive for this.

DOCTOR: First things first, however. We need to know the details of his arrangement with Yanis's mercenaries.

ERIMEM: Is this true, Horemshep? It is. I see it in your face.

DOCTOR: What other reason is there for Yanis not attacking yet? The mercenaries stayed outside the city as a constant visible threat while Horemshep here stirred up trouble inside the palace. But there's more to it than that now, isn't there, Horemshep?

HOREMSHEP: Indeed there is. Fayum.

(Peri squeals.)

DOCTOR: Peri!

ERIMEM: Release her, Fayum.

FAYUM: Give us free passage from the city, or I open this girl's throat to the bone.

ANTRANAK: You will never leave this room alive, boy.

DOCTOR: He means it, Antranak. Let them go.

ERIMEM: Do it.

DOCTOR: Let them pass. Don't provoke them.

FAYUM: Very wise, stranger. Your strength and intelligence will be of great use to us when we take the city. We will take a chariot. Keep well back or the girl dies.

(Peri makes a mmph. The door creaks open then slams shut.)

ERIMEM: Doctor, what now? I'm

DOCTOR: Confused? Another hundred questions to ask and don't know what to do next?

ERIMEM: Yes.

DOCTOR: The first thing is to mobilise every soldier you have, and every chariot. I think war's about to be declared and I don't want Peri on their side of the lines when the fighting starts.

(Chariot at speed, whip cracking.)

FAYUM: Yah! Yah! Stop struggling, girl.

PERI: Not on your life. Once you're clear of the city, you don't need a hostage.

FAYUM: Ah, you have a sharp mind.

PERI: And a hard knee.

FAYUM: Oh, stop!

PERI: Not a chance. Oh!

(Jumps off, coughs. Chariot fades into the distance.)

DOCTOR: Peri, are you all right? You could have been killed jumping off a chariot moving that fast.

PERI: Oh, I think I swallowed half the desert. Oh, what's a few cuts and bruises. Nothing that kicking those two where it hurts won't cure.

DOCTOR: Nothing wrong with your temper, anyway.

ERIMEM: Peri, I'm glad you're safe. Antranak, how long until all our troops can be mobilised?

ANTRANAK: My men are already armed and waiting. The temple guards and chariots need only a few moments.

DOCTOR: Good. Tell them to head for the north gate.

PERI: What are you planning, Doctor?

DOCTOR: I'll tell you after you've let Erimem's doctor look at those cuts. The last thing we need is you catching an infection. Now Antranak, the mercenaries outnumber the troops in the city. If we fight here we'll lose.

ANTRANAK: Are you saying we should run like cowards?

DOCTOR: Nothing of the sort. I'm saying we should head for Giza and meet up with the garrison there. It should take a while for the mercenaries to follow us.

ANTRANAK: After they've laid waste to Thebes. Pharaoh, let me lead an attack on the mercenary camp. I will wipe them from the face of your kingdom.

DOCTOR: You'll be slaughtered inside an hour. Erimem, you must trust me.

ERIMEM: You have never failed me, Doctor, but neither has Antranak. Whatever decision I make, good people are going to die.

PERI: Trust the Doctor, your majesty. Please.

ERIMEM: Very well. Assemble the troops at the north gate, Antranak, and no arguments. Have them ready for a hard quick march to Giza.

ANTRANAK: As you wish, mighty one. I hope you know what you're doing, Doctor.

DOCTOR: So do I.

FAYUM: Whoa!

YANIS: So you failed, Horemshep. I knew you would.

HOREMSHEP: I thought you'd be pleased, Yanis. Now you will have your battle.

YANIS: And this is?

FAYUM: I am Fayum.

YANIS: I remember you. So, this is the pup you planned to put on the throne. You should have told me, boy. I wouldn't have whipped you so hard.

HOREMSHEP: That is unimportant now. All that matters is taking Thebes.

FAYUM: And the Doctor.

YANIS: My troops are prepared. Only the fair haired stranger is to be taken alive.

FAYUM: Yes, the Doctor must not be harmed.

YANIS: No one touches him. He's mine. Attack now. I want to be knee-deep in Egyptian blood before the hour is out. Then I'll bed that brat Pharaoh herself, before I open her guts to the jackals.

(Draws sword.)

YANIS: Attack!

(Cheers.)

YANIS: I can taste the blood already.

ANTRANAK: The troops are prepared, Pharaoh, but the mercenaries are moving on the city. My men do not want to leave Thebes unguarded.

ERIMEM: We go north.

DOCTOR: And we'd better get going.

PERI: Doctor, wait. Are the troops really abandoning the city? The people are terrified.

DOCTOR: Not so much abandoning as making a strategic withdrawal north, to Giza. I assume you're joining us?

PERI: You think I want to be here when those mercenaries come knocking? Thanks, I'm with you.

DOCTOR: I thought you'd say that. You'll travel with Antranak.

PERI: You've got it all planned.

DOCTOR: One tries.

PERI: Well, where will you be?

DOCTOR: Well, I'll be with Pharaoh.

ERIMEM: I will need the Doctor's counsel a great deal in the coming days.

DOCTOR: I think we'd better get moving, don't you?

ERIMEM: Antranak, begin the march. Open the gates!

(Gates creak open.)

ERIMEM: Forward!

(Lots of shouting men.)

YANIS: Where are they, Horemshep? You told me they'd be waiting to die.

HOREMSHEP: The troops are ready. Don't be so eager for battle.

YANIS: I live for battle, imbecile, and your Egyptian troops threaten to deprive me of it. We're within sight of their gate and they have yet to fire a single arrow.

HOREMSHEP: It could be a trap. The Doctor is a cunning enemy.

YANIS: Kishik! Come here, dog!

KISHIK: My Lord Yanis, the rest of our men report the same. None of them have seen any soldiers.

YANIS: Where are they?

KISHIK: The Egyptian troops are leaving the city. They're marching to Giza.

HOREMSHEP: Call off the attack.

YANIS: Oh, but the city's unguarded. We can take it easily.

HOREMSHEP: There is a greater prize than the city.

ANTRANAK: Pharaoh! Pharaoh!

ERIMEM: What is it, Antranak? The mercenaries?

ANTRANAK: Our rear scouts report that the mercenaries have ignored Thebes and are following us. With their slower chariots, they're half a day behind us. You planned this, Doctor. You knew that they would follow us and the city would be safe. I misjudged you. You are a true

warrior.

DOCTOR: Maybe you should think about strengthening our rear defences. Our chariots are faster than theirs, but they may try a sneak attack. Hit and run. Try to pick off a few men at a time.

ANTRANAK: I will see to it now.

ERIMEM: Thank you. It is a great relief that Thebes is safe. Your plan worked. Why do you seem so troubled?

DOCTOR: Because it confirms what I suspected. They knew what we were doing. It couldn't have been their scouts, they reacted too quickly for that. I'm afraid there's a spy among us.

ERIMEM: Who? Tell me and I will have their heart cut out.

DOCTOR: I'd rather you didn't. You see, I think their spy is Peri.

[Part Four]

ERIMEM: Peri? You must be wrong.

DOCTOR: I wish I was, but I don't think so.

ERIMEM: Well then, she must be interrogated.

DOCTOR: Whoa! Whoa, there. Before you do anything, I think I should tell you exactly what we're facing. You may find this hard to believe, but I promise you that every word is true.

ERIMEM: Tell me.

DOCTOR: When I went to the mercenary camp, I found a stasis box from a prison ship. It's like a cell for special prisoners.

ERIMEM: What kind?

DOCTOR: In this case, the kind who can affect the minds of others. A creature of pure mental energy. It must have been freed when the prison ship crashed.

ERIMEM: How can such a creature exist?

DOCTOR: It's like a virus, an infection, reproducing itself as it passes on to another victim, all of them linked telepathically so that the creature gets the knowledge of everyone it infects, as well as control of their bodies. One vast mind with an army of hosts. Initially the hold would be quite weak, and some of the host's personality will stay. The stronger the host mind, the longer it will take to gain control, but as time passes, the host will be destroyed to make way for this creature.

ERIMEM: But what would it want?

DOCTOR: The same as every other creature in the galaxy. To survive, to reproduce. Evolution has made it a parasite. It needs the lives of others to carry on living. I wondered how it passed on, but when I saw the change in Fayum after Horemshep grabbed him, I realised it must be by touch.

ERIMEM: Who are you to know these things, Doctor? No, Horemshep asked *what* are you? You are not a normal man. You have fought off fatal poison and turned the sky black, but I do not believe you are a god any more than I am, because I don't believe in any of our gods.

DOCTOR: You don't?

ERIMEM: I believe in real things. I have heard of men who study the stars and say that we travel round the sun, not it round us. One of these men even claims that the world is round like a ball.

DOCTOR: Does he indeed?

ERIMEM: There are other men who study plants or animals or rivers or make extraordinary devices with wood and metals. You are like them, but not exactly the same. I can't explain it.

DOCTOR: I wish I could tell you.

ERIMEM: Then do.

DOCTOR: I'm just a traveller.

ERIMEM: Then tell me of your travels. That can do no harm.

DOCTOR: Perhaps one day I shall. For now we have Peri to worry about.

ERIMEM: Peri. This creature was passed to her by touch.

DOCTOR: When Fayum had her hostage. She's strong-willed, but soon they'll know everything she knows. We must make sure she hears nothing of our plans when we make camp tonight.

Hiyah!

(The chariot rattles on again.)

PERI: Oh!

ANTRANAK: Lady Peri, are you ill?

PERI: Just a little disorientated for a minute, Antranak. How far are we from Giza?

ANTRANAK: We will be there by tomorrow afternoon.

PERI: How long till we make camp tonight?

ANTRANAK: We will travel until dark, and be gone in the morning with the first light.

PERI: How big is the garrison at Giza?

ANTRANAK: A hundred chariots and around eight hundred men. Lady, why do you ask so many questions?

PERI: Er, just curious. Do you worry that your chariots have a weak spot?

ANTRANAK: You have no need to fear an attack, lady. We are well clear of the mercenaries.

PERI [OC]: But you must be worried that their chariots have heavier armour. Or do you have a plan for getting round that?

HOREMSHEP: The girl's mind is opening to us. That idiot Antranak will tell her everything we need to know.

FAYUM: She must be wary, Horemshep. If she asks too many questions, he will become suspicious.

YANIS: Eight hundred men, Fayum. Is that all they can muster? Make it four thousand and there would still be slaughter within the hour.

KISHIK: They will reach Giza half a day before us, my lords.

FAYUM: They will use the time to prepare.

YANIS: Let them prepare. They'll be trampled into the sand.

HOREMSHEP: The Doctor must not be harmed.

YANIS: I will cut a channel through their troops to him myself.

FAYUM: What is he?

HOREMSHEP: Her mind is not yet completely clear to us. She is not sure, but they travel in space. If he has a craft, we will be free to colonise other worlds again.

YANIS: Yeah, and to conquer them.

(Camp fire crackles.)

ANTRANAK: Set sentries round the camp ten paces apart, and stay alert. Ah, there you are, Doctor. Do army rations agree with you?

DOCTOR: Mmm, I've had worse, Antranak. Not hungry, Peri?

PERI: What? No.

ERIMEM: You should try to eat something. Tomorrow will be another long march, and then there will be the battle.

DOCTOR: Here, try this.

PERI: I said I'm not hungry.

DOCTOR: I insist. Doctor's orders. It'll do you the world of good. You've been looking rather peaky. We'll discuss the battle after we've eaten.

PERI: Oh, what is this?

DOCTOR: Actually, it's probably best that you don't ask.

PERI: It tastes, it

DOCTOR: It's all right, Peri. Heat and the travel just got to you. Peri? Out like a light.

ANTRANAK: I'll help you carry her to her tent.

ERIMEM: No, don't touch her. What did you put in her food, Doctor?

DOCTOR: A little something I got from your physician. She'll be right as ninepence in the morning. Well, as close as she can be in the circumstances. I'm going to get some blankets. We mustn't move her. Would you mind explaining things to Antranak?

ANTRANAK: Let me help.

ERIMEM: No. Sit with me, old friend. I have a strange tale to tell you. We face a strange enemy, Antranak, like none even you have

YANIS: Horemshep, why are we stopping? If we carry on through the night, we'll be close enough to attack by dawn.

HOREMSHEP: And the men will be too tired for battle, Yanis. We will make camp here for the night, Fayum. Pass on the order.

FAYUM: As you wish, Horemshep.

YANIS: They would cross a river of burning oil if I ordered them.
HOREMSHEP: And finish as dead as they would if we marched through the night. We need *living* hosts, not corpses.
YANIS: Cowards! You are not fit for the prize ahead of us. Enjoy your sleep. I'll set sentries for the night. Kishik! To me, you dog! To me!
FAYUM: Yanis is dangerous, Horemshep. His will is strong and control over his mind is limited. We should kill him.
HOREMSHEP: In time he will be with us fully. Until then, we must curb his violent ideas.
FAYUM: And if he continues to resist our will?
HOREMSHEP: Then we will remove our presence from his mind before his body is killed.

(In a chariot.)

ERIMEM: We should be within sight of the tombs of my ancestors any time now.
DOCTOR: You're remarkably bright today, majesty, especially given how late you had me tell stories last night.
ERIMEM: Your stories cheer me, Doctor. They give me some hope that our cause is not so desperate. After all, we do not face, what was it? Daleks, and Cybermen, and
DOCTOR: Yes. Yes, well, I think I may have said a little more than I intended. Ah, there are the pyramids. No matter how often I see them, they never fail to impress.
ERIMEM: Can you believe they are hundreds of years old?
DOCTOR: They're built to last. The Sphinx even more so.
ERIMEM: I have often wondered whose face is on the Sphinx. My teacher believed it was Cheops.
DOCTOR: Definitely not Cheops, although I have heard some bizarre stories about him. Whoa! Whoa.
ERIMEM: Would it surprise you to know that I am terrified, Doctor?
DOCTOR: I'd be surprised if you weren't.
ERIMEM: Doctor, last night you told me stories of many times and places. Do you really know all these things? Do you know what will happen in the battle today? What will happen to me?
DOCTOR: Even if I knew exactly what happens today, I couldn't change it.
ERIMEM: I will die today.
DOCTOR: I didn't say that.
ERIMEM: Your face did.
DOCTOR: I don't know that you'll die.
ERIMEM: But I will never be Pharaoh. You told Peri that you knew the names of every Pharaoh. I am not one of them.
DOCTOR: I'm sorry.
ERIMEM: It's strange. I'm not surprised. I have always been sure that I would never be Pharaoh. Perhaps I do have a destiny after all, but a different one than I expected.

ANTRANAK: Majesty, your troops at Giza wait to greet you.
DOCTOR: So, Peri, how are you feeling now?
PERI: Fine now. Are those barriers the best you have?
DOCTOR: I'm sorry?
PERI: I mean, those wooden barriers won't hold up their heavy chariots for long.
ERIMEM: They will have to. They are the best we can manage in such a short time.
ANTRANAK: Majesty, the sentries have spotted the enemy massing just over the high dunes to the south.
DOCTOR: Five miles or so. Resting before the attack, I imagine, which should give me just enough time.
PERI: Time for what?
DOCTOR: A quick stroll under the Sphinx.
ANTRANAK: Impossible. There's no way into the Sphinx.
DOCTOR: Actually, there is. There's a well four hundred metres directly behind it.
ANTRANAK: It's a useless thing, dry as dust. A few of the locals throw scraps in it. They believe it's home to sacred cats who drank all the water in it.
DOCTOR: I don't know about the cats, but there's no water there because it's not a well at all. It's a sink shaft, used by the people who built the Sphinx. It leads under it and branches off under the Pyramids as well, come to that, but it's the Sphinx I'm interested in.
PERI: Why? What's under there?

DOCTOR: Well, contrary to the common belief of your time, the Sphinx is much older than the Pyramids, dating back to around ten thousand BC.

ERIMEM: BC?

DOCTOR: Another time. Anyway, it was built by refugees from Atlantis, who placed all their knowledge in a chamber between its paws. The Hall of Records. We'll find what we need to beat the mercenaries and their infection down there.

ANTRANAK: How can you know all this? These tombs are at least a thousand summers old.

DOCTOR: Well, I am a little older than I look. Right, I'd better get started. Peri, you stay by the river. If things go badly, there'll be boats heading for safety.

PERI: I'd rather stick with you.

DOCTOR: Well, if you're sure.

ERIMEM: Good luck, Doctor.

DOCTOR: And to you. To all of us!

FAYUM: If there is a weapon, he cannot be allowed to find it.

YANIS: How can he be so old?

HOREMSHEP: He is an alien and a time traveller.

FAYUM: The girl has heard of Atlantis. He must be stopped. We must attack immediately.

HOREMSHEP: The troops are still very weary after the long march.

YANIS: They fear me more than death. You've rested long enough, pigs! Rouse yourselves! We attack now!

(Cheers.)

ANTRANAK: They are beginning their attack.

ERIMEM: Our troops know what they must do?

ANTRANAK: They must avoid hand to hand contact with the enemy at all cost. Oh, this is a dishonourable enemy. One that hides out of sight in others.

ERIMEM: But it is still an enemy to be defeated if we all play our part.

ANTRANAK: Pharaoh? What are you doing?

ERIMEM: I did not bring the battle crown for show, and I cannot ask my men to go into battle while I watch safely from a distance. I am proficient with the bow and battle spear. You were a good teacher. I will lead the attack.

ANTRANAK: Your father would have been proud of you.

ERIMEM: Only if we win the day.

ANTRANAK: Pharaoh, their chariots.

ERIMEM: Do it.

ANTRANAK: Archers, ready! Ready! Fire!

FAYUM: Their archers are cutting our chariots down like cattle, Horemshep, while ours only hit those barricades.

HOREMSHEP: Our chariots are almost too close for their archers now. We still have enough to overrun them.

YANIS: Kishik's infantry will break through their lines easily, and then the Doctor'll be ours. Infantry! Forward!

DOCTOR: You know, this shaft is deeper than I remember. How are you doing with the ropes? Peri, I asked how

PERI: Fine, Doctor. How much further?

DOCTOR: Well, these torches don't give much light, but it shouldn't be far now. Ah, there we are. Careful. Another ten feet, five, there.

(Cats meow.)

DOCTOR: Oh. Well, there definitely are cats here. Hello, puss.

(Cat yowls.)

DOCTOR: Oh, you're house-trained, obviously.

PERI: This way?

DOCTOR: When it branches, we go straight on. Keep your torch up. There's no way of knowing what sort of damage time has done down here. These tunnels are millennia old. The slightest disturbance could cause a cave-in.

(Shouting and fighting.)

ANTRANAK: Their chariots are too close for the archers to be of any effect now, Pharaoh.

ERIMEM: Have the archers concentrate on their foot soldiers. The chariots are our task now.

ANTRANAK: Archers! Target their infantry! Chariot squadrons, attack in formation now!

(Gallop and shouting.)

KISHIK: My lord, we are winning.

YANIS: Of course, Kishik. These Theban dogs are weak.

KISHIK: Forward! Cut them to pieces! Slice the (whoosh) Argh!

YANIS: Kishik? Kishik! You will be avenged. Kill them all! Kill them all!

FAYUM: No, Yanis. We need them alive! Yanis!

(Sword fighting.)

ANTRANAK: They're pushing us back, majesty.

ERIMEM: Hold the line. The Doctor needs more time.

ANTRANAK: We need more foot soldiers. They could become infected, but we'll be overrun in minutes without them.

ERIMEM: Very well. Bring forward the infantry.

ANTRANAK: Majesty. Infantry! Forward!

ERIMEM: Let's hope we give the Doctor the time he needs.

FAYUM: Over there! Erimem!

YANIS: She fights like a demon.

HOREMSHEP: The Doctor. Concentrate on finding the Doctor!

ANTRANAK: Majesty, Fayum and Yanis, they're heading for the shaft. But where's Horemshep?

ERIMEM: No matter. We must stop them. Go back for the infantry, Antranak. The Doctor needs my help. Send soldiers down after me when

ANTRANAK: Majesty oh!

HOREMSHEP: I fear he will be passing no messages for you.

ERIMEM: Horemshep. I should have expected a coward like you to attack from behind.

(gasps)

YANIS: I'll open her for the buzzards.

HOREMSHEP: No, Yanis. The Doctor values her life. But if she attempts to escape, break her arm. Erimem, you planned to join the Doctor below. We will all go down together.

(Cats yowling.)

DOCTOR: These tunnels stretch further than I remember. Maybe I'm not as young as I was, or the cats have been busy digging.

PERI: What are the inscriptions on the pillars?

DOCTOR: A potted history of Atlantis, and prayers that the people and wisdom of Atlantis will be remembered.

PERI: What wisdom? Is it the weapon you're looking for?

DOCTOR: There are lots of different kinds of weapons, Peri. Not far now. Ah, here we are.

PERI: A blank wall?

DOCTOR: Only to those who don't know what they're looking for. It's the door to the Hall of Records. Hold the torch steady.

PERI: Open it.

DOCTOR: All in good time. This door hasn't been opened in eight and a half thousand years. It's not the sort of thing you want to rush.

HOREMSHEP: Open it, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Horemshep. I was wondering when you would turn up. And you too, Fayum.

FAYUM: Open the door. We must have the weapon.

DOCTOR: Hand over a weapon to a grubby little mind parasite like you, and a criminal to boot? I don't think so somehow.

YANIS: Open the door or I will snap the girl's neck.

DOCTOR: Erimem?

ERIMEM: Don't give it to them.

YANIS: Quiet!

DOCTOR: All right, all right. Just don't hurt her.

FAYUM: Is this a trap? Tell me.
DOCTOR: Suddenly I don't feel all that chatty, Fayum.
HOREMSHEP: Then we will take the knowledge from your mind. If you resist, Yanis will snap Erimem's neck.
ERIMEM: Doctor?
DOCTOR: Quiet, Erimem. All right, Horemshep. I won't fight you. Just don't harm her.
HOREMSHEP: Let us into your mind, Doctor. When you are part of us, we will spread across eternity.
FAYUM: His mind is vast.
DOCTOR: Thank you.
YANIS: We must have his mind.
DOCTOR: Actually, I'm using it at the moment.
FAYUM: With your knowledge, we can spread across the planet. We can have all planets, all times. We can be supreme.
DOCTOR: None of you are strong enough to take my mind from me.
HOREMSHEP: No single one of us, it is true. But for all we are many, we are one mind, and we will come together to take your mind.
ERIMEM: Doctor, what's happening?
(Horemshep cries out.)
DOCTOR: All the different fragments of the parasites are leaving the other hosts. Human, insect, everything, and coming together in Horemshep so that he can take my mind.
HOREMSHEP: Nearly, Doctor, but I am not the host.
HOST: I am.
(Peri, with a calm British accent and a slight echo.)
DOCTOR: Peri? No, this isn't how it's supposed to happen.
HOST: You will not fight your friend. You care too much for life. That is why you are weak.
DOCTOR: Let her go.
HOST: Do you threaten me? This one believes that you would have a plan of some kind.
DOCTOR: So Peri's thoughts are still in there.
HOST: Do you have a plan?
DOCTOR: An offer. Now that you've left the minds of all the people you affected on Earth, I can take you off this planet.
HOST: Transport? To where?
DOCTOR: There are any number of uninhabited worlds.
HOST: No. We need, I need new bodies so that I can grow.
DOCTOR: One with non-sentient life, then.
HOST: How could I exist inside a blank mind? That would be worse than death.
DOCTOR: Would it be any worse than you've done to people here? Taking their bodies and wiping their minds. Leave Earth, please.
HOST: No. Give yourself to us, Doctor. You can become greater than even you can imagine.
DOCTOR: I'm afraid you leave me no choice.
(Beep, beep.)
ERIMEM: The talisman you used to block out the sun.
DOCTOR: Telepathic inhibitor. When I activate this, it'll disorient the creature in Peri's mind until I deliver it to the appropriate authorities.
(Beep, boop.)
PERI: Doctor? No, please.
DOCTOR: No, you can't trick me that easily. Goodnight.
PERI: No!
HOST: I am still here.
DOCTOR: Full power.
HOST: I am too strong, The machine cannot keep me. You have lost, Doctor.
DOCTOR: Erimem, how are Fayum and Horemshep?
ERIMEM: Fayum's in a daze, but Horemshep has fled.
DOCTOR: And this isn't working quite as I'd planned.
HOST: You are beaten, Doctor. Accept the fact. I have the knowledge of thousands to call upon. Even you can't defeat that.
DOCTOR: Can't I? Thousands, you say. I wonder. Who are you?
HOST: I have no name. I
DOCTOR: I'm not asking you. I'm asking the memories you've taken. Who are you? Peri, I

know you're still in there. Who are you? Peri?
PERI: Peri Brown.
DOCTOR: Who else? You have the memories of thousands. Who else are you?
(A male voice speaks at the same time as the Host.)
HOST: Ebren.
DOCTOR: Who are you, Ebren? What do you do?
HOST: I am a farmer. I raise sheep.
DOCTOR: Who else is there?
HOST: I
DOCTOR: Tell me who you are, all of you.
HOST: I am Ebren. I am Shemek.
ERIMEM: He was my teacher.
DOCTOR: Ask him a question. Anything. Quickly.
ERIMEM: Where did you give me my lessons?
HOST: In the gardens, of course. You liked the smell of the flowers, and you could see what was happening in the palace. You always were a gossip.
DOCTOR: Another question, Erimem.
ERIMEM: What was my favourite lesson? Do you remember?
HOST: Of course I do. You always wanted to hear more of the history of our people. You made me tell stories long after I should have gone home,
DOCTOR: Ebren, who told you stories. Did your parents tell you stories when you were a child?
HOST: My father, until he died, and then my mother. I told stories to my son.
DOCTOR: Ask them more questions, Erimem. As many as you can think of. As varied as you can.
ERIMEM: Shemek, do you remember when I fell from a tree?
HOST: I thought you had died, little one.
DOCTOR: Ebren, where do you live?
HOST: On the edge of the desert
ERIMEM: Shemek, where do you live?
HOST: In the
DOCTOR: Ebren, who lives with you?
HOST: My son and
ERIMEM: What was your wife's name, Shemek?
HOST: Nefral. She died.
DOCTOR: Peri, where do you live? Who lives there with you?
ERIMEM: Who are your sons, Shemek?
DOCTOR: Where did you go to school, Peri? Where did we meet? Ebren, tell me the names of your family.
HOST: Four sons, Shintu, Lanzarotte. I was there on vacation with my
ERIMEM: What's happening to her?
DOCTOR: She's trying to deal with three sets of memories at once. The human mind wasn't designed to do that. Keep asking them questions.
ERIMEM: What city do you live in, Peri? Tell me about it. Tell me about the people. How do they choose their leaders?
HOST: By election.
DOCTOR: Ebren, you were trying to tell me about your sons. And you, Shemek.
HOST: I have four sons. No, I have three, and two daughters.
DOCTOR: Which is it? Are you Ebren or Shemek? Peri, keep talking about the elections.
HOST: I have. We vote every
DOCTOR: Your sons. How many?
ERIMEM: The election, Peri.
HOST: It's too much.
DOCTOR: I hope we've time to finish it. Who else can hear me? How many of Yanis's mercenaries are there? How many more of you. Answer me! Who are you? Tell me. Tell me your names. all of you.
HOST: Amerit, Tushka, Shemek. I'm Shemek. I'm Corfret. No, Merenhapsut. Ebren.
PERI: Peri! I'm Peri! I'm Peri Brown!
HOST: I'm Silliphar. Moeshba. Fullin.
PERI: I'm

DOCTOR: Who are you? Who are you!
ERIMEM: Where did you come from? Where do you live?
DOCTOR: What's your name?
ERIMEM: What did you eat last?
DOCTOR: Where were you born?
ERIMEM: Who do you love?
DOCTOR: Who are you?
HOST: I'm. I am. My children. I, I can't
PERI: Too many voices. Too many. I can't
(The echoing multiple voices of the Host stop. A cat yowls.)
ERIMEM: Is she dead?
DOCTOR: Unconscious. Her mind couldn't cope with a thousand sets of memories and shut down. No, no, don't touch her. Keep back. At least until the inhibitor's switched on. (beep)
There, that's it. No, shoo! Get away from
(Cat snarls.)
DOCTOR: Keep away from the cat. The entity's passed a fragment of itself into that. Come here, you little brute. Missed. I need something to catch him in.
ERIMEM: My cloak.
DOCTOR: Got it. Come on, come on. Gently. Gently. Ah, got you. Calm down, I'm not going to hurt you. Just tie the inhibitor around your neck. There, that's better, isn't it?
(Cat snarls.)
DOCTOR: Ow!
ERIMEM: Give him to me, Doctor. You tend to Peri.
DOCTOR: Be careful, he's
(Cat purring.)
ERIMEM: Yes?
DOCTOR: Oh, never mind. Peri? Peri? Out cold. Good. I think we should get out of here.
YANIS: What's happened? Why is
DOCTOR: The least of your worries, Yanis. Go now.
YANIS: You. You've done this to me. I will cut you apart and let the cats feed.
DOCTOR: Yanis, we don't have time for this.
YANIS: You still have an enemy here, Doctor.
FAYUM: And you still have one here, Yanis.
YANIS: Quiet, boy! You'll die once I've dealt with these. I can still have Egypt when your Pharaoh is dead.
FAYUM: You will not harm her!
YANIS: What? You, boy, fighting me? I should have killed you back at the camp.
FAYUM: You're welcome to try again.
(Swords clash.)
ERIMEM: Fayum is a strong fighter, Doctor, but he can't hold Yanis for long. We must finish this quickly
DOCTOR: Erimem, go. Take the cat and go. I'll bring Peri as soon as I can. Just go!
YANIS: I'll get you, Fayum. You won't get far.
FAYUM: Further than you! Argh!
YANIS: Argh! You, you
FAYUM: The roof.
DOCTOR: It's millennia old. There's no telling what damage he did when he stumbled against the pillar.
FAYUM: I should finish him.
DOCTOR: There's no time for that. Go. Go! Ah, come on, Peri.
YANIS: Run, pigs. I'll find you.
(Stones tumble.)
YANIS: I'll track you down and slaughter you. Argh!
(Roof fall.)

(Wind blows.)
ERIMEM: Doctor! When the ground shook, I feared the worst. It even cracked the face from the great Sphinx. I am pleased you are both alive.
DOCTOR: We'll be as right as rain as soon as I've had the Tardis purge the creature from Peri and your cat. Fayum, take her arm, will you? (effort) What about the battle?

ERIMEM: The mercenaries have fled, but there has been enough death today. Let them go.

ANTRANAK: Even this one, majesty?

ERIMEM: Antranak!

ANTRANAK: I saw Horemshep climb out of the well. I persuaded him to stay.

ERIMEM: Oh, Antranak, I feared you were dead.

ANTRANAK: Merely a flesh wound, your majesty. It takes more than that to keep me down when I have a Pharaoh to protect.

HOREMSHEP: Majesty, Pharaoh, it wasn't my doing. The demon creature made me do this.

ERIMEM: Send him to Thebes in chains. Let him answer to a court.

HOREMSHEP: But, your majesty, I, you don't understand (receding) I was really

FAYUM: And me?

DOCTOR: Fayum, you were hardly responsible for your actions, and you did save us from Yanis.

ERIMEM: You committed no crime, Fayum.

ANTRANAK: You fought Yanis and won?

FAYUM: I'm more surprised than you are, Antranak.

ANTRANAK: Oh, I doubt that. I have to be more careful when I argue with you in future.

ERIMEM: There was no weapon below, Doctor, was there. It was just a lure to isolate the creature in one body.

DOCTOR: That would be telling.

ANTRANAK: What are your orders, Pharaoh?

ERIMEM: Doctor?

DOCTOR: Home, I think.

ERIMEM: Home.

(Chanting Erimem, Erimem.)

PERI: Honestly, Doctor, I'm fine. Don't fuss. You've been asking how I feel every hour, on the hour, since we got back to Thebes.

DOCTOR: Well, you had quite an ordeal.

PERI: And I'm fine now.

ERIMEM: I am pleased to hear it.

DOCTOR: It sounds like the people are waiting for you, Pharaoh. They're eager to celebrate your victory.

PERI: Look at the size of that crowd.

ERIMEM: I don't feel like celebrating a battle that cost untold lives.

PERI: At least now you can be Pharaoh.

ERIMEM: No, I can never be Pharaoh, can I, Doctor?

PERI: Why not? Don't tell me. History. So Erimem went through all this for nothing.

DOCTOR: You could stay and be Pharaoh. I won't stop you.

ERIMEM: I have done my duty. Egypt is safe, and Fayum will make an excellent Pharaoh, though he doesn't know it yet.

PERI: But he's not really your brother.

ERIMEM: So? He will still make a better Pharaoh than I.

PERI: Where will you go?

ERIMEM: North, to one of the islands. Or perhaps Greece. No one will know me there. I can study and learn.

DOCTOR: It may not be that easy. Your face is already on coins and works of art.

PERI: We could take you somewhere, couldn't we, Doctor.

DOCTOR: Absolutely not. It's out of the question.

PERI: Why? You said yourself there's nowhere civilised here she can go without being recognised.

DOCTOR: Yes, but that's hardly a good enough reason for me to take her off through Time and Space.

ERIMEM: What will I do if I stay here? Let me come with you, please?

DOCTOR: If I do, you can never come back.

ERIMEM: There is nothing to keep me here now.

DOCTOR: Oh, all right. You want to learn, you say?

ERIMEM: Yes!

DOCTOR: I suppose there are a few university chancellors around the galaxy who owe me favours. I'm sure we'll find you somewhere acceptable.

PERI: You'll probably wind up teaching Egyptian history.
ERIMEM: It would be impossible to get through these crowds before nightfall.
DOCTOR: Oh, I think we'll manage. In here.
ERIMEM: (amused) Do you plan to carry me out in this blue box of yours?
DOCTOR: Something like that. In you go.
ERIMEM: Very well. Wait! I can't go without my pet.
(Cat purring then snarling.)
DOCTOR: Oh, if you must.

(Console room hum.)
ERIMEM: (gasps) I, I don't believe it.
PERI: Just don't believe that the Doctor can really control this thing.
DOCTOR: Thank you, Peri. I'll have you know that the Tardis and I are in perfect harmony.
Most of the time.
PERI: At least I got to know whose face is on the Sphinx.
DOCTOR: I thought the cave-in damaged the face.
ERIMEM: It did. My sculptors are busy repairing the damage. Fayum and the Council thought that *my* face should go on the great Sphinx, but I didn't want that. Instead, Peri gave them very exact images of the king to work from.
PERI: *The* king.
DOCTOR: Peri? What have you done?
PERI: It won't change anything. Napoleon's troops will still use the face for target practice in three thousand years time, so nobody'll know whose face it was. Besides, the Sphinx is close to Memphis, and there's only one king from Memphis.
DOCTOR: (sighs) Oh, tell me you didn't.
PERI: Ah ha ha.
(Tardis door closes.)
ERIMEM: Elvis is a very strange name for a king.
(The Tardis dematerialises.)

(Door opens.)
ANTRANAK: Pharaoh, we are ready to
FAYUM: Pharaoh? Pharaoh, the people are. Pharaoh? Pharaoh?
(Dematerialisation sound fades away.)
ANTRANAK: Pharaoh? Erimem?
FAYUM: She's gone, Antranak.
ANTRANAK: She truly was a god, Fayum.
FAYUM: Oh. Now what?